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# The Female Gaze

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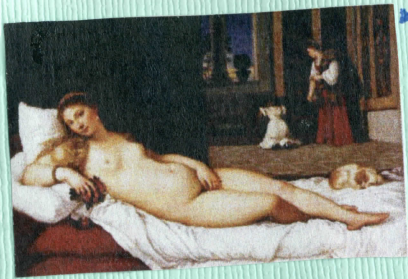
# The Female Gaze

A • Feminist • Analysis • On • Art • History

(Elisabeth) Ellie Cooper  
(Veronica) Ronnie Millison  
Olivia Matos

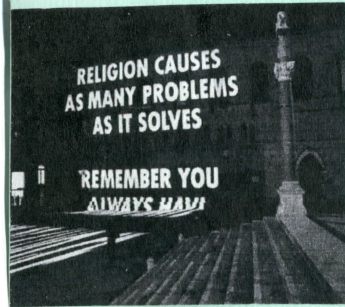


# Feminist Art Critique 101



her maids are frantically trying to clothe her.

Is "Venus of Urbino" posing to empower her self? Or is her pose made to appeal to the male gaze?



How to learn the modern art protest

1. Focus on a target audience and convince your supporters
2. Grab the audience's attention
3. Work with your supporters
4. Schedule protests to make an impact
5. Market yourself, and advertise your intentions
6. Use the media
7. Follow up, make your protests known and don't take no for an answer

The viewer has walked in on her bathing.



She is gathering her robe to hide herself from the viewer.

## The Male Gaze

The objectification of females in man made works. For example Praxiteles sculpture Aphrodite of Knidos was the first nude sculpture of a deified female. This sculpture is known as the first example of bringing the viewer into the piece. The premise is that the Aphrodite is caught undressing by the viewer making her vulnerable and uncomfortable. The sculpture also an early example of the male gaze, showing females as an object of male pleasure. Venus in Urbino by Titian is also another example of the male gaze, as she looks lustfully at the viewer while her maids try to cover up her nudity. Works discussing feminist art theory. The Male Gaze reinforces the idea the female body is not her property, and the man has control of how she is dressed because she is an object of his pleasure. This concept also assumes that the viewer of the artwork is a male



Why have there been no great women artists?

# Artemisia

Linda Nochlin ~  
"the nineteenth century, one might be forced to admit that a large proportion of artists, great and not-so-great, in the days when it was normal for sons to follow in their father's footsteps, had artist fathers. In the rank of major artists, the names of Holbein and Durer, Raphael and Bernini, immediately spring to mind; even in our own times, one can cite the names of Picasso, Calder, Giacometti, and Wyeth as members of artist-families."

This was the case for Artemisia. She was the prodigy of her father, she had several siblings but only one that could paint.

Gentileschi became extremely well known in her time for painting female figures from the bible and their suffering.

Tassi

Her Nurse

Artemisia



Judith Slaying Holofernes (1612)

When Artemisia moved to Florence to apprentice under Tassi she experienced the unfortunate trauma of Tassi raping her. Since he took her virginity he "tainted" her making her unable to get married. She depicted her emotions from the trauma in "Judith Slaying Holofernes"

# Gentileschi

She was only 17 when she painted this

{Susanna and the Elders (1610)}



Artemisia painted a woman in grotesque anguish with a knife clutched in her hand choosing this as a way to portray a woman being assaulted. However she was told to turn it down and the one in color is the final version.

"As long as I live I will have control over my being"

Who? a female Baroque painter, and was the prodigy of her father Orazio Gentileschi  
What? She specialized in mythical and biblical stories and mostly focused on women's suffering  
Where? She began her painting in Rome, later painted in Florence, then returned to Rome, and moved to Naples where she resided until her death in 1653

When? During the Baroque period. The Baroque period empathized dramatics and theatrics in its artistic style

Why? Her father Orazio Gentileschi was a well renowned painter in his time, Artemisia was the only one of her siblings to have a talent in painting. Her father sent her to work with Tassi, her encounters with him lead to an artistic expression of her tragedy.

A Roman Painter who worked closely with Tassi; Orazio painted the works "Lot and his daughter" and "The Lute Player"

ELLIE  
Ronnie

# Harriet

# Powers

WHO: Harriet Powers: A brave African American slave who specialized in creating stitched storylines on quilts.

WHAT: Embroidered beautiful quilts by hand-where she learned remains a mystery. It is important to understand that she was able to create folk art in the time where her existence was for the convenience of another family.

Powers became significant in academic circles more than half a century after her death as an exemplar of the influence and power of women's domestic art and art inspired by traditions outside the Western canon, showing not only this type of art's historical purpose and importance but its aesthetic influence and significance.

WHEN: When the second wave feminist movement in the 1970s brought domestic art into the discussion of art history, textiles became a central topic. This led to the rediscovery of Harriet Powers.

WHERE: She was born and raised a slave in Georgia, now her artwork is respected and presented at the Smithsonian and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Adam and Eve in the garden.  
The sun and the moon. God's  
all-seeing eye and God's  
merciful hand.



Pictorial Quilt

Both of her quilts were made post civil war in 1865. They consist of numerous pictorial squares depicting biblical scenes and celestial phenomena. Powers constructed each square by hand or a machine for stitching.



The Bible Quilt

Powers should be remembered not only for her brave and patient career in slavery but also for being a female artist that went missing in the art world only to be found again.

VIA



Frída was never ashamed to discuss her sexuality in her paintings. She had affairs with both men and women. She broke down heteronormative barriers by refusing to conform.

"Kahlo painted a feminine reality which makes visible so much that has remained hidden in women's lives. Although these concepts were clearly not part of Kahlo's consciousness, much of her work is a visualization of the theme that the personal is political."

Kahlo didn't paint for them to be political statements. She said "I paint my own reality" but that's why they are political. Her personal is political.



Kahlo was severely injured in a bus crash when she was 18. This is when she first got into art. Instead of hiding her pain over her injuries she put them in her paintings. She didn't shy away from sharing with the world everything she experienced even if others thought it was grotesque.

Ronnie

# Frída

# Kahlo

She was a strong woman and her art made her stronger

"I was born a bitch. I was born a painter."



A lot of Kahlo's work deals with conception, pregnancy, abortion, and gender roles in a very open and unapologetic manner which was rare at the time. This makes a lot of her art a political statement calling out issues society likes to shy away from

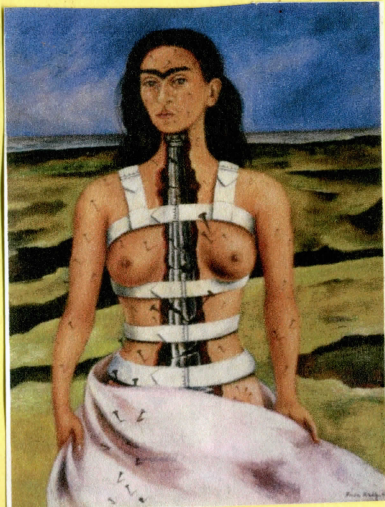
Frída in a family portrait dressed in a suit refusing to conform to gender stereotypes and highly contrasted her mother and sisters in their dresses.

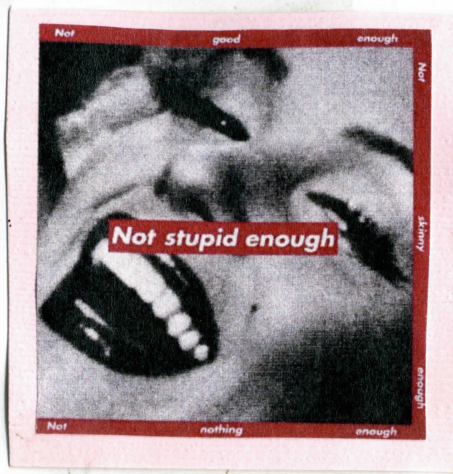
Who? A Mexican surrealist contemporary artist.

What? Her main medium was painting. Her paintings often had strong autobiographical elements as she did a lot of self portraits and mixed realism with fantasy. Her paintings regarding pain and passion were painted in bold, vibrant colors which is one of the unique things about her work.

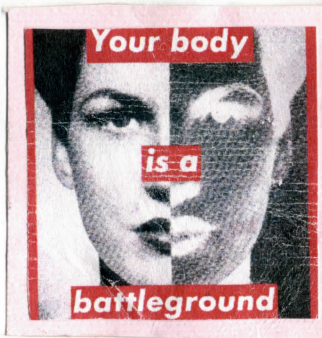
Where? She started painting when she was in Mexico, however after she married muralist Diego Rivera she traveled around the United States with him. Now her work is being shown in many museums across the country as well as The Frida Kahlo Museum in Coyoacan, Mexico, in her childhood home.

Why? Kahlo refused to alter her 'masculine' features, including her monobrow and faint moustache. A lot of the time she exaggerated these in her paintings. Her work is known to represent Mexican national and Indigenous traditions, and is seen as an uncompromising depiction of the female experience and form.





Her work is very in your face and causes all genders to confront certain issues mostly social ones.



# Barbara Kruger

Her art was a commentary on religion, sex, racial and gender stereotypes, consumerism, corporate greed, and power.

- Kruger won the MOCA Award to Distinguished Women in Arts.

untitled was designed for the 1989 March on Washington in support of legalized abortion.

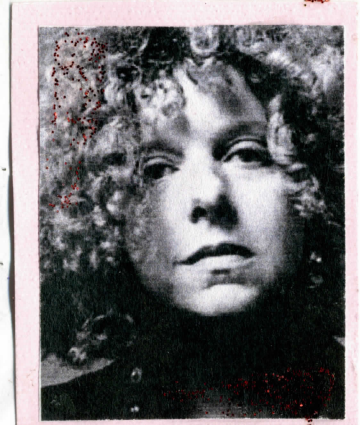
What? American conceptual artist most known for her one liners and collages  
 Where? Grew up in New Jersey and attended art school in New York  
 When? Most of her notable works were made in the 1980s while her first exhibit was in 1979 and is still creating art.  
 Why? Her works all are made to stand out to the viewer and make them question their own choices and perspective on the world. She aims to empower women and make them stronger through her artwork.

Audrey Corda wrote "Poetry is not a luxury: Kruger found that poetry was helpful to conveying a message, and used this to create her art with feminist motifs"

Her art consists of short bursts of words that when isolated, linger in your mind making you think about them.

Kruger  
 "I try to deal with the complexities of power and social life, but as far as visual presentation goes I purposely avoid a high degree of complexity."

"I see my work as a series of attempts to ruin certain representations and ~~to~~ to welcome a female spectator into the audience of men. If this work is considered incorrect all the better, for my attempts aim to undermine that singular pontificating male voice-over which correctly instructs our pleasures and histories or lack of them"

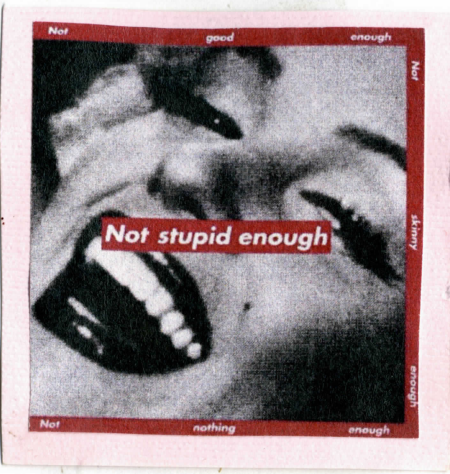


Her exploration of photography led to her iconic style of black and white photos with a bold white slogan on a red background.

Look Familiar?  
 The street wear brand, Supreme, lifted Barbara Krugers as the design for their famous box logo T-shirt



ELLIE B. ROANIC



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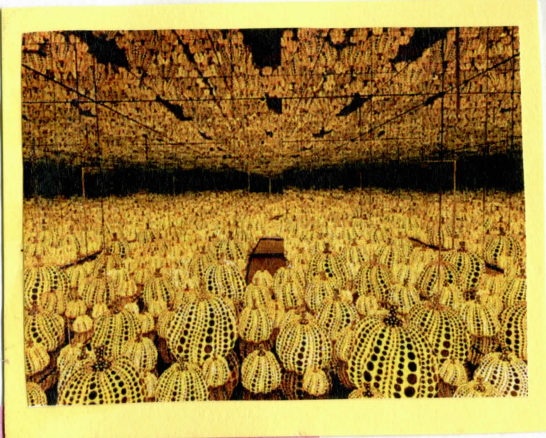
ELLIE B. ROANIC



# Yayoi Kusama



Kusama Reclining on Accumulation



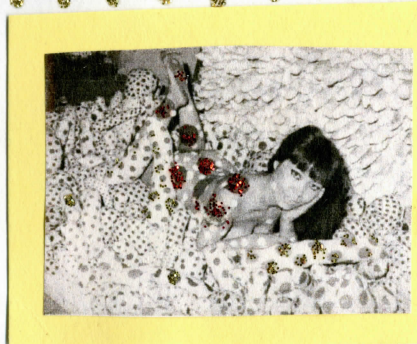
Kusama felt like her art was the most important thing.

"My mother was against me being an artist, she just wanted me to marry a rich man"

Who? A Japanese contemporary artist  
 What? Her medium is mostly installation and sculpture. She created infinity rooms, polka-dot sceneries, and paintings using her body as a brush and canvas.  
 Where? Her work started in real Japan, and received harsh criticism, she later moved to NYC to pursue art  
 When? Her work became popular in the 1960s during the second wave of feminism. Kusama's work is being displayed in museums and gallery's such as the Broad, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.  
 Why? Art Historians have noted that her infinity rooms filled with phallic symbols are a metaphor. Kusama views this as a never ending masculine power surrounding her. In her early works she broke the barriers of art by posing nude and using her body as a canvas and brush. Kusama used art as a means to break down barriers in the name of liberation and empowerment

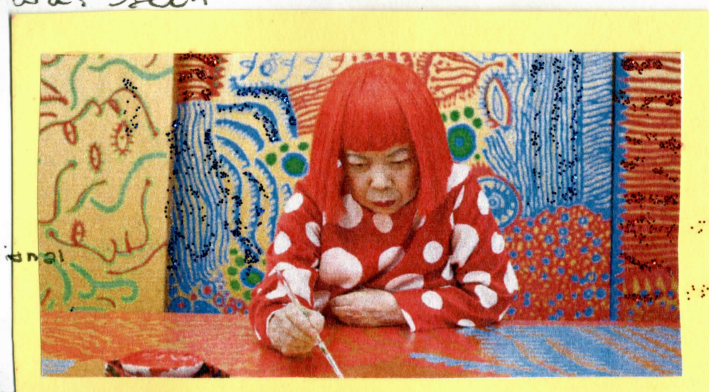
↑  
 Kusama's 1993 installation "All the Eternal Love I Have for Pumpkins".

what do you think the pumpkins look like



Kusama expressed feminist values by posing nude in the 60's, which was seen as very scandalous. Kusama still is able to bring intersectional ideals into her protests and performance art.

During the Vietnam War Kusama staged many happenings as a means to protest the war. She often appeared nude as a means of protest. She even wrote him a letter offering "vigorous sex" as a bribe to stop the war.



her artwork is often angry, projecting the truth behind the world we live in. She catches the public eye with her poetry and the way she chooses to show it. Advertising it on streets and utilizing bold colors leaves people uneasy when they are awakened by the truth.

Jenny

Holzer

OF THE U.S.A.  
RICH FUCKERS SI  
NING OF THE F

"I want the meaning to be available, but I also want it to disappear into fractured reflections or into the sky..."

We all are thinking it, why shouldn't she project it!

Other feminists, like EMMA Goldman in Love and Marriage, would agree.



Jenny believes that love is only an idea possessed by the public that is romanticized and made up by the media. She takes issues such as these, and widens the public eye in hopes we achieve a better understanding of the truth.



... Because one's focus comes and goes one's ability to understand what's happening ebbs and flows.

- Jenny

**When:** 1970s-2010's  
**What:** Artwork that represents those without the authority within our social structures. Jenny Holzer is not a fan of our society's tendency of demolishing the importance of others with conservative and outdated assumptions and beliefs.  
**Who:** A strong, but rather passive, female artists that calls attention towards social justice and equality. Her strong voice projected through her art work reflects her efforts towards egalitarian ambition to reach the broadest cross-section of humanity.  
**Where:** All over! Places one would expect to see art fighting for social justice: on the streets, projected LED one-liners, parking meters, t-shirts etc..!  
**Why:** Jenny composed her work for the ones who receive the tail end of the abuse of power, along with nailing the power abuser with her stark pieces of work. Both political activist and artist, uses her profound skepticism of power as motivation to generate strong works of art.

Just don't we do bite!

DON'T TALK DOWN TO ME. DON'T BE POLITE TO ME. DON'T TRY TO MAKE ME FEEL NICE. DON'T RELAX. I'LL CUT THE SMILE OFF YOUR FACE. YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. YOU THINK I'M AFRAID TO REACT. THE JOKE'S ON YOU. I'M BIDDING MY TIME, LOOKING FOR THE SPOT YOU THINK NO ONE CAN REACH YOU, NO ONE CAN HAVE WHAT YOU HAVE. I'VE BEEN PLANNING WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING. I'VE BEEN SAVING WHILE YOU'RE SPENDING. THE GAME IS ALMOST OVER SO IT'S TIME YOU ACKNOWLEDGE ME. DO YOU WANT TO FALL NOT EVER KNOWING WHO TOOK YOU?

1993  
 Holzer's skepticism toward's power targets the male's abuse of domination.

VIA



Dearest Eli Broad,

It has come to our attention that your Oh So Significant art collection contains an Insignificant number of women and artists of color.

As a civic leader in a city as diverse as L.A., you must feel terrible about this!!! We are sure you will rectify the situation immediately.

All our love,  
Guerrilla Girls

Broad Contemporary Art Museum (BCAM) at LAOMA: 30 artists, 97% white, 87% male  
Broad Foundation collection: 194 artists, 96% white, 86% male

# Guerrilla Girls

They wear disguises, use false names, put their art in places they shouldn't and disrupt Pash art events. Who are these monkeys and what are they up to?!?!"

## BOY CRAZY

### I'M NOT A FEMINIST BUT IF I WAS, THIS IS WHAT I WOULD COMPLAIN ABOUT

#### IRISH MUSEUMS ARE BOY-CRAZY

Only 2% of the artists in the collection of the National Gallery of Ireland are women.  
The Tate Museum of Modern Art has 40% women.

Only 2% of artists on display at the Irish Museum of Modern Art are women.  
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#### ALL DRESSED UP AND NO PLACE TO GO

90% of major U.S. art fairs are in female cities.  
Museum visits are 70% by women.  
Los Angeles has the most women.

#### IT'S ACADEMIC

The most powerful of the Grand National Academy is 95% male. Royal Ulster Academy 87% male.

#### HERE'S A NO-BRAINER

70% of book art shows are women.  
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70% of book art shows are women.

### WHEN: 1985-PRESENT

**WHO:** The Guerrilla Girls hide their real identities by calling themselves names of great women artists from the past like Frida Kahlo and Käthe Kollwitz, and by wearing masks when protesting or fly-posting their posters.

**WHAT:** The Guerrilla Girls wear masks so their devotion towards fighting sexism is caught by many. They spew facts about the under representation of women in the art world, using outrageous humor and visual. The humiliation method goes along way when challenging ethnic bias'; they use specific names of artists, statistics, and crude humor in order to capture the public eye.

**WHERE:** Outside in museums that do not represent women or women of color or women in general, directly to art collectors, a collection of their work including, "The Advantages of Being a Female Artist" (1988) is represented in the Tate Modern museum in London.

**WHY:** "We were just a bunch of girls who couldn't put up and shut up. We saw something that had to be done and we figured out a way to do it."

## "We Can't Not"



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