

Conference

Women and the Arts

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

Hidden Histories of the Museum: Women Transforming Art Collections

Thursday 23 October 2025

Pigott Theatre, Sainsbury Wing, National Gallery (and online)

9.00am

Arrival via Sainsbury Wing Entrance – Tea & coffee served outside the Pigott Theatre

9.30am

Welcome and Introduction – Christine Riding, Director of Collections and Research;
Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Lead; and Jon King, Research Fellow

Keynote

Introduced by Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Lead at the National Gallery

09.40am

Women and Museums 1850–1950: Hidden, Ignored or Undervalued? –
Kate Hill, University of Lincoln

Panel 1

Women as Museum Professionals: Photographers and Record Keepers

Chaired by Alan Crookham, Chief Librarian and Archivist at the National Gallery

10.30am

'Expert assistance': Women's Hidden Histories in Museum Catalogues –
Meaghan Clarke, University of Sussex

10.50am

**Isabel Agnes Cowper: Official Museum Photographer at the South Kensington
Museum** – Erika Lederman, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

11.05am

**In Secret Service: Suzanne Severn and the Photographic Documentation of the
National Gallery Collection in Wartime Wales** – Carlo Corsato, National Gallery

11.20am

Questions (15 mins)

11.35am

Break with Tea & Coffee (25 mins)

Panel 2

Women as Museum Professionals: Curators

Chaired by Laura Llewellyn, Curator of Italian Paintings before 1500 at the National Gallery

12.00pm

The Hidden Histories of Women Curators – Rachel Esner, University of Amsterdam;
Laia Anguix-Vilches, Utrecht University

12.20pm

Loud Shoes: Sixty Years of Art Curation in Regional Collections –
Emma Roodhouse, Colchester & Ipswich Museums and Tate Britain

12.35pm

'One Woman Show[s]': Lillian Browse's Exhibitions in Britain, 1940–1945 –
Isobel Muir, Tate Britain

12.50pm

Questions (15 minutes)

1.05pm

Lunch (1 hour)

Panel 3

Transforming Museums through Philanthropy: Women as Patrons, Collectors and Donors

Chaired by Susanna Avery-Quash, Senior Research Lead at the National Gallery

2.05pm

The Discovery of Women: Searching and Researching Women in the Modern Museum – Theresa Kutasz Christensen, Pennsylvania State University

2.20pm

Interwoven Histories: Female Donors and Museum Employees at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (1918–1956) – Bram Donders, Royal Collections of the Netherlands and the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam; Eva van Bladel, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

2.35pm

Dismantling Patronage: Exploring the Evolution and Influence of Female Collecting and Philanthropy through National Trust Collections – Gabriella de la Rosa, National Trust and Sulgrave Manor; Alice Strickland, National Trust

2.50pm

Who Have We Here? Women, Imperial Violence and Collecting at the British Museum – Hannah Cusworth, Royal Museums Greenwich and UCL

3.05pm

Questions

3.20pm

Break with Tea & Coffee (30 mins)

Panel 4

Transforming Museums through Institutional Influence: Advocacy and Intervention

Chaired by Jon King, Research Fellow at the National Gallery

3.50pm

Recognising Women's Contributions to the Parliamentary Art Collection in the 19th and Early 20th Century – Caroline Babington, Independent Researcher;
Cara Gatherern, UK Parliament Heritage Collections

4.10pm

Sarah Purser and the Development of Ireland's Public Art Museums –
Logan Sisley, Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin

4.25pm

Behind the Artist's Eye: Bridget Riley at the National Gallery –
Richard Johns, University of York

4.40pm

Questions (15 minutes)

4.55pm

Conclusion

5pm

Drinks reception – Served outside the Pigott Theatre

6pm

End of Conference

Acknowledgements

This conference forms part of the Women and the Arts Forum programme and is generously supported by The Diane Apostolos-Cappadona Trust in honour of her mother, Stacia Apostolos.