

LET'S TALK ABOUT 'WOMEN ARTISTS' AND WHAT THIS TERM MEANS

The very valid arguments for and against using the term "women artists."



Edouard Manet, *Portrait of Eva Gonzalès*, 1870

Here are some things I know about the art world:

[...]

According to the Guerrilla Girls¹, less than four percent of the artists in the Modern Art section of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art are women, but 76 percent of the nudes are female. Since 2007, only 29 percent of the Whitney Museum's solo exhibitions were dedicated to women artists. MoMa²'s upcoming exhibitions schedule features a hefty majority of men. [...]

Male painters are still perpetuating the myth that women make bad artists: "Even though the painting classes in art academies are more than 90 percent made up by women, it's a fact that very few of them succeed," Georg Baselitz said earlier this year. "If women are ambitious enough to succeed, they can do so, thank you very much. But up until now, they have failed to prove that they want to. Normally, women sell themselves well, but not as painters."

¹ Association féministe américaine

² New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art

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These are just numbers, yes, with a few anecdotes tossed in. [...] The reality is: women are underrepresented in the art world. It's not just that women (and particularly women of color) don't get as many solo shows. They don't get as many directorial positions, they don't fill the top slots at art auctions³. All of this, despite the fact that in most countries, women make up more than 50 percent of those graduating with degrees⁴ in Arts & Humanities. [...]

[...] Critics often argue that the term "women artist," or its sister phrase "female artist," does more harm than it does good. They wonder: is the act of grouping women artists into one happy contingent reductive?

It's a valid concern⁵-- one that we'll probably continue to debate as we inch closer and closer to gender parity in the art workplace. Our thoughts will evolve as women move out of the periphery and into more and more spotlights."

Adapted from: The Huffington Post. 11/20/2015

³ Ventes aux enchères

⁴ diplômes

⁵ Problème

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