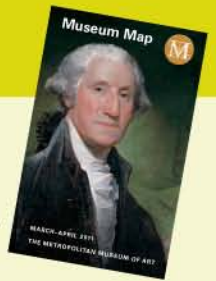


# Six Women, Six Stories





**T**oday women are politicians, teachers, doctors, artists, lawyers, and much more. But it wasn't always easy for women to have careers outside the home. Even the art world was mostly reserved for men. Despite all sorts of challenges, women became successful artists and helped blaze the trail for others. This guide looks at six women artists, their amazing works of art, and their fascinating stories!



**1** Use the Museum Map and the gallery numbers to find your way. Keep in mind: sometimes we have to move works of art or even close galleries to renovate them or prepare for exhibitions. When in doubt, ask a guard for help! **Start in Gallery 601, European Paintings Galleries, 2nd floor**



Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (French, 1749–1803)  
*Self-Portrait with Two Pupils, Marie Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818)  
and Marie Marguerite Carreaux de Rosemond (died 1788), 1785*  
Oil on canvas; 83 x 59 1/2 in.  
Gift of Julia A. Berwind, 1953 (53.225.5)

## A Teacher and Her Students

List the items that tell you this scene is in an artist's studio:

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Is the artist dressed for painting?

This painting is a self-portrait. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard [pron. ah-deh-la-EED lah-bee-ghee-YAR], the seated woman, has painted herself and two of her students in fashionable silk dresses. This shows her skill as both a portrait painter and a teacher. At the time, Labille-Guiard was one of only four women accepted as members of the important Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in France. Membership gave artists the chance to show their work in major exhibitions.



**Bonus: More female painters!** Can you find three other paintings by women in this gallery?



**Drawing Activity:** Adélaïde Labille-Guiard is looking at you! Draw the picture on her easel.

2

**Go to Gallery 631, European Paintings Galleries, 2nd floor**

## A Courageous Queen

What do you think happened right before this moment? What will happen next?  
The man rising out of his chair is a king.  
How can you tell?

According to the Bible, the brave Jewish Queen Esther risks death by coming before her husband, Persian King Ahasuerus (pron. ah-HAZ-yoo-EER-us), without his invitation. She seeks to end threats made against her people. To prepare for her visit, Esther fasts for three days. Artemisia Gentileschi (pron. ahr-teh-MEE-zee-yah jen-ti-LESS-kee) painted the very moment after the queen's request, when she faints. Notice how the king responds. Does Esther have his support?

Four hundred years ago in Italy it was hard for women to study art. Fortunately, Artemisia learned from her father, Orazio Gentileschi, who was a master painter. Artemisia became one of the most accomplished artists of her time. Even the king of Spain asked her to paint for him!



Artemisia Gentileschi (Italian, 1593–1651/53), *Esther before Ahasuerus*, about 1640; oil on canvas; 82 x 107 3/4 in.; Gift of Elinor Dorrance Ingersoll, 1969 (69.281)





Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–1899), *The Horse Fair*, 1853–55; oil on canvas; 96 1/4 x 199 1/2 in.; Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1887 (87.25)

3

*Go to Gallery 812, Nineteenth-Century European Paintings Galleries, 2nd floor*

Circle the words you think best describe the scene:

- |        |             |            |
|--------|-------------|------------|
| calm   | exciting    | quiet      |
| rowdy  | sweet       | fun        |
| rough  | organized   | tame       |
| stormy | adventurous | disorderly |
| wild   | loving      | boring     |
| serene | angry       | happy      |
| moving | noisy       | still      |

## Unbridled Energy

Take a few steps back to look at this large picture. Imagine the sounds and smells at the horse fair. What would they be?

This scene is full of excitement. Notice the strength of the horses and their owners. Find the person with a black cap in the center of the painting looking out at you. This might be the artist, Rosa Bonheur. Beginning in 1851, for a year and half she made sketches at the horse market in Paris. She needed to observe the horses from real life to paint them accurately. But since women didn't usually go to a horse fair, Bonheur actually dressed as a man! Bonheur went on to become one of the best painters of animals. This is her most famous painting.

**Did You Know?**  *The horse market wasn't the only place in Paris not open to women: the School of Fine Arts didn't allow women to study there until 1897! Bonheur first learned to paint from her father, who was an artist and encouraged her artistic career.*



4

Go to the south stairwell off Gallery 920, Modern and Contemporary Art Galleries, 2nd floor

## Off the Wall

This is a sculpture of a woman, but does it remind you of a wall-climbing creature? Which one?

Finish the sentence: This work of art makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_.

Imagine yourself in this position. Are you powerful? Sneaky? Stealthy? What other words describe how you feel?

Lilith was a legendary woman from the Bible known for her strength and independence. Kiki Smith made this bronze sculpture almost life-size, which makes Lilith seem eerily real. But perched upside down on the wall, she does not quite look human. Smith, a living artist, is known for making art that challenges the way people think about women. If you met the artist, what question would you ask her?



Kiki Smith (American, born 1954)  
*Lilith*, 1994  
Bronze with glass eyes; 33 1/2 x 27 x 17 1/2 in.  
Purchase, Roy R. and Marie S. Neuberger  
Foundation Inc. Gift, 1996 (1996.27)

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Go to Gallery 910, Modern Art Galleries, 1st floor

## Red, Bone, and Blue

Where would you normally find a cow's skull?

Georgia O'Keeffe loved the desert of New Mexico and would often collect bones she found there. Some people think of death when they see a skull, but to O'Keeffe it was something that lasted forever. She placed the skull up close and sharply focused so you notice all of its jagged edges and crevices. By using red, white, and blue combined with the skull, she creates her own symbol of the United States. Can you find more paintings by O'Keeffe in this gallery?



**Did you know?** Georgia O'Keeffe is considered one of the most important women artists. Her painting *Red Poppies* was even reproduced on a US postage stamp.



Georgia O'Keeffe (American, 1887–1986), *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue*, 1931; oil on canvas; 39 7/8 x 35 7/8 in.; Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1952 (52.203)

## A Teacher and Her Students

Many different materials were used to make this bag. Can you find:

glass beads    deerskin    red cloth    porcupine quills

(Hint: Find the quills in the three rectangles below the rider and horse.)

Georgia O'Keeffe used red, white, and blue in her painting. How has Joyce Growing Thunder Fogarty, an Assiniboine Sioux artist, used these colors? By showing the flag upside down, she is following a tradition passed on from her ancestors. What might have been their feelings about the United States government?

Fogarty is a living artist who is continuing the beading tradition her ancestors began many generations ago. Sometimes she spends sixteen hours a day working, waking as early as 4:00 A.M.! She lives and works on a reservation in Poplar, Montana, and is known internationally for her art.



### Fun Fact!

The quills are gathered from a dead porcupine, washed, and flattened. The artist flattens the quills using her teeth. They are then dyed, wrapped, and stitched around the hide to make the design. Not a simple process!



### At-Home Activity

These six women artists are all trailblazers who led the way for others. Think about the inspiring women in your life. Who stands out and why is she important to you? At home, make a portrait of her using pencils, paints, or collage.



Joyce Growing Thunder Fogarty (Assiniboine or Sioux, born 1950), *Tobacco Bag*, 1977; native-tanned deerskin, pigment, glass, quills, cloth; 40 x 8 in.; Ralph T. Coe Collection, Gift of Ralph T. Coe Foundation for the Arts, 2011 (2011.154.12)



### Education

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