

Lauren Nurse

2006679

Ways of Perceiving

Ryan Moule

Photography in the Arts

Women in Art

Final Word Count- 1,760

“It’s shameful. However, it’s not surprising: Western Art- it’s a white male thing.” With the lack of women in art and a lack of their work being shown in galleries, I wanted to shed some light on more female lead art by using this exhibition, with an opportunity to show many variations of artwork, all done by women, as 30% of gallery represented artists are female, which is simply not enough. I aimed to use more than just paintings and photographs, but by using sculptures, music, and installations, to showcase many different skills and practices, while also including artwork from influential women in art and lesser-known artists.

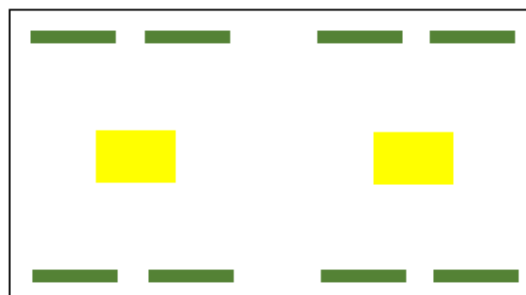
For this exhibition I wanted all aspects of it to be made by women, I wanted to find a suitable place for the exhibition, which lead me to find a few good locations that were created by female architects, one of these locations being Wotton House. The house was built in the 17th century, in Surrey, it was originally thought to be designed by John Fitch, but in 2010 there was an investigation launched by an architectural historian to find out who was the original designer. Which lead him to find it was originally designed by Elizabeth Wilbraham, who designed the house and many other properties, but could not take credit

for it at the time, it was also discovered that she is also one of the first known female architects.



(Wotton House)

I wanted to show many pieces of work, which would mean using two different rooms, with different layouts in order to fit all the artworks, one of the rooms including many different paintings and photographs, with two different sculptures placed in the middle of the room alongside the painting and photographs against the walls, as I wanted to have the art make a two separate X shapes. I wanted to create this pattern from the artworks, as women have XX chromosomes, and I wanted as much of the exhibition to be authentic to the theme as possible. In the other room, I wanted it to have an installation and a composition piece playing in the background so that it is a multi-sensory experience, and to show more than just physical art.



(Diagram of exhibition – Green-Painting/photographs Yellow-sculptures)

The installation piece that I chose for the second room, is a piece by Judy Chicago called “The Dinner Party”, it is a triangled shape table, with 39 place settings for influential women in history, each place setting is made in a style that would suit each of the women, each

place setting is embroidered with a name, and has a plate with a pattern that is shaped like a vulvar. Each side of the table has a different section of history, including “Classical Rome”, “Christianity to the Reformation” and “American Revolution to the Women's Revolution”.

Before entering “The Dinner Party” there are six woven banners made with gold writing, which each banner with its own line of writing. In the middle of the tables is the Heritage floor which had been hand crafted with porcelain tiles with the names of 999 mythical and historical women, which both literally and metaphorically gives support to the table. There is also a separate room which gives details of each of the names, and which includes an acknowledgement of each person who worked on the installation. Overall, there were 1,038 women’s names from history that were included in the installation, which is why it is so influential within art, especially art that shines light on women and their achievements, which is why I wanted to include it in my exhibition.



(The Dinner Party- 1979)

In the same room I have chosen a piece of music to go along with the installation, the piece that I have chosen is “Notturmo In G Minor” by Fanny Mendelssohn, who was a German composer, who despite being a woman, managed to have a musical education, she was discouraged to have a career in music and was encouraged by her father to only compose music as a hobby, unlike her brother who was encouraged to peruse it as a career. Despite

the misogyny that she faced Mendelssohn created over 450 pieces of music, which is why I wanted to include some of her work within my exhibition. For my exhibition I will have Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" and Mendelssohn's "Notturmo In G Minor" playing in the same room, as I feel these pieces go well together and I wanted there to be more than just something to look at, but for it to be an all-around experience.

In the second room there will be 10 separate pieces of art, including four painting, four photographs and two sculptures, one of which including a piece called Nature Study by Louise Bourgeois, who was a French/American artist know for creating sculptures and installations about sexuality and the body. This sculpture is made from bronze tubular coils which has a human hand cradling a female figure, which looks very peaceful and gentle. The hand represents a mother cradling a daughter, who will then also become a mother, creating a circle of life, within the sculpture. This sculpture works well within my exhibition as it represents life cycle within women and how women are often expected to have children and how it had become a social norm to do so.



(Nature Study - 1986)

Along with this sculpture I will include a piece called “Body Language” by Nnenna Okore who uses traditional African techniques, to create her work as her work is woven and dyed using traditional African craft. She makes large scale woven artworks, that are bright and colourful, with intricate designs. She also uses natural materials in her work and uses organic fabric to create her sculptures.



(Body Language - 2015)

One of the paintings that I will include in the exhibition is “Marie Antoinette” by Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun who was French painter in the 18th century, her paintings are very soft and detailed, she was given permission to paint Marie Antoinette, and went on to paint over 30 paintings of Antoinette and her family. I thought it was interesting how she painted Antoinette, as she was also an influential woman in history, as the queen of France and someone who helped to start the French Revolution to overthrow the monarchy, which is why this painting deserves be included in the exhibition, as it showcases two influential women in history.



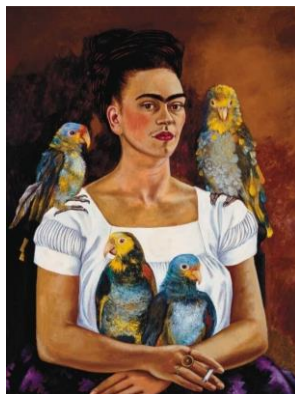
(Marie Antoinette- 1783)

The second painting that will be used in the exhibition is “Self-portrait” by Gwen John, who was a Welsh painter, who mainly painted portraits of women, she went to the only art school that allowed female students (Slade School of Art) before moving to France. She has always been in the shadow of the men around her as her brother is the painter Augustus John, which may be why she is lesser known, therefore I wanted to have some of her art within the exhibition and I chose John’s self-portrait to reflect her.



(Self-Portrait- 1902)

“Me and My Parrots” is a painting by Frida Kahlo, who was a Mexican artist, she incorporated her culture within her art, by using bright colours, to make her images warm toned. She was known as being a feminist icon within art by creating art regarding herself and other women, with her monobrow beings a feminist symbol. She is also one of the most well know female artists in history, which is why it was necessary to include one of her paintings with the exhibition.



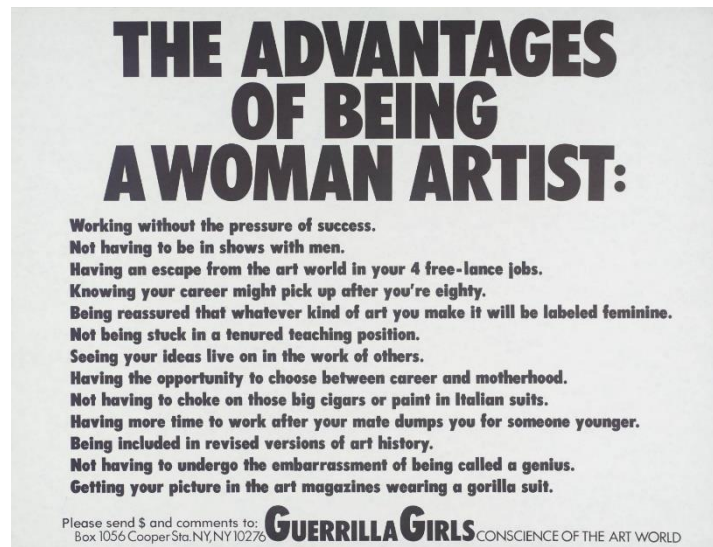
(Me and My Parrots- 1941)

The last painting that I wanted to include is called “Composition” by Mainie Jellett, she was a pioneer of abstract paintings and was considered an iconic figure in Irish art history. She created many paintings with various shapes and colours to create different silhouettes. There is a rhythm within her work, with the way that she uses lines and shapes, as well as having a good understanding of lighting.



(Composition- C.1932)

I will also be using photographs as part of the exhibition, the first one being “The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist” by Guerrilla Girls, who are a group of anonymous female artists who create artwork that depicts what it is like to be a woman in the art world, this image is a part of a bigger piece of work called “Guerrilla Girls talk back”, as they are always making art about discrimination towards women in the world of art. This piece is an ironic list of what it is like to be a woman in the art world, showing the struggles of being a woman making art which includes some of the issues that women must deal with when working in a male dominated industry, which is why I wanted to include at least one of their pieces of work in my exhibition, as they create very important and relevant pieces of art depicting the struggles of being a female artist.



(The Advantages of Being A Woman Artist 1988)

“Untitled Film Still #17” is a photograph taken by Cindy Sherman who is one of the most famous female photographers, her images are very different and unique to most other photographers, as she creates many different characters, by using vintage clothing, this image was just one of many as a part of untitled film stills that she made while living in New York between 1977 and 1980.



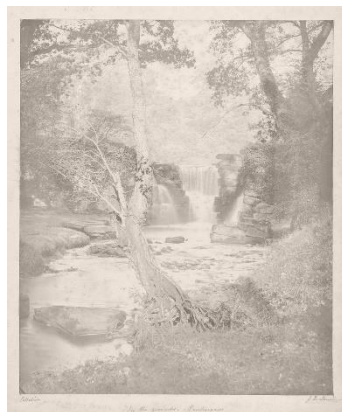
(Untitled Film Still #17- 1978)

The next photograph that I will be including is “Bona, Charlottesville” by Zanele Muholi, they are an artist from South Africa, who uses their photography to express how they feel and perceive race, gender and sexuality. Their photography is beautiful and manages to capture the beauty in each of the people they use in their photographs.



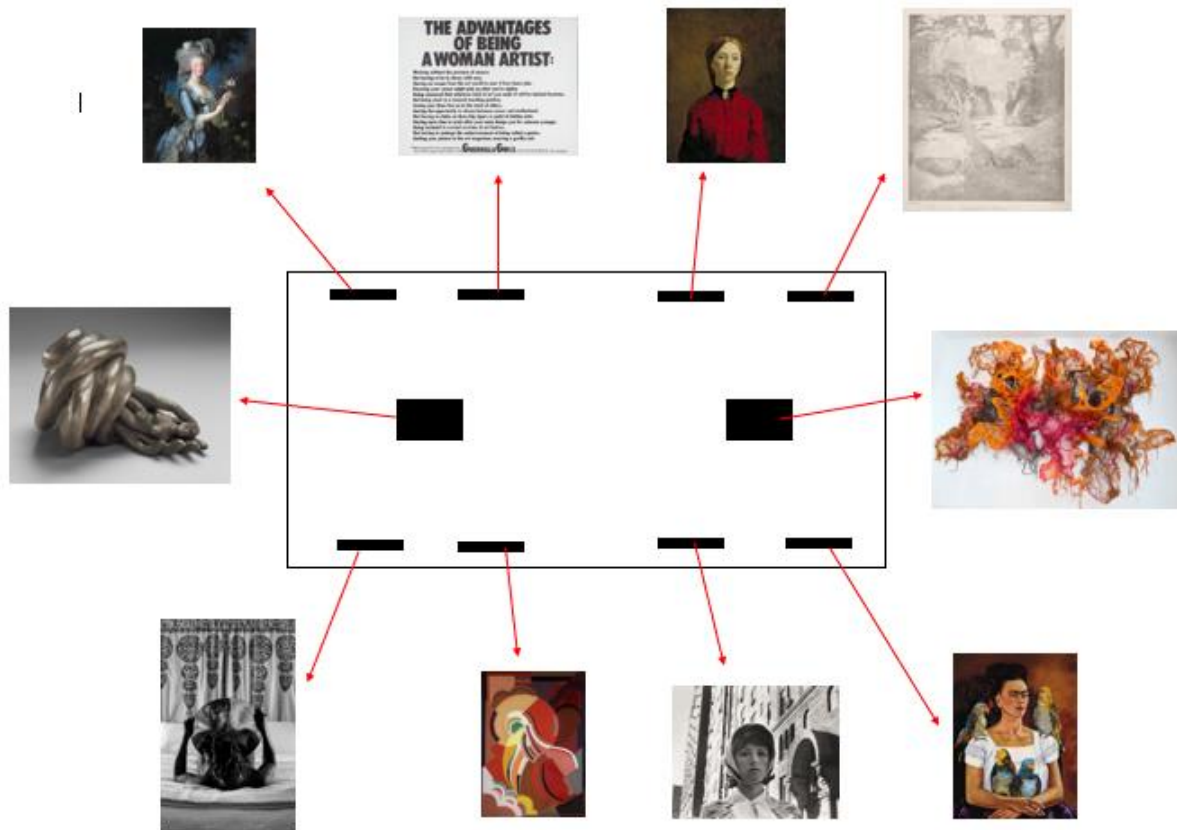
(Bona, Charlottesville- 2015)

The last piece of art is called “In the Grounds” by Thereza Dillwyn Llewelyn, I wanted to include one of her photographs as she was a Welsh astronomer and photographer, who also came from a family of photographers as her aunt was Mary Dilwyn who was one of the first female photographers in Wales, and her mother’s cousin was Henry Fox Talbot who was one of the founding fathers of photography. She took many photographs around South Wales, including Tenby and Oxwich Bay, this photograph was taken in Penllergaer woods, which is where she lived and was born.



(In the Grounds- 1855)

Here is my final floorplan of the exhibition-



Overall, this exhibition displays the work of many female artists, from well-known women to lesser-known artists, the artworks that have been chosen for the exhibition, work well together while also showing off each of their work individually. The placement of the art works well to display all the talent and the smaller details are what bring the exhibition together as a whole.

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