graphik, die die Anleitung zur Wahrnehmung von Dürergemälden mit religiösen Sujets innerhalb einer Sammlung liefert. Putzger folgt hier den Spuren der beeindruckenden Studie von Anja Grebe *Dürer. Die Geschichte seines Ruhms* (Petersberg 2013), die die Auswirkungen der Dürerrezeption auf die Beurteilung seines Werkes nachgezeichnet hat. Putzger möchte deutlich machen, dass Maximilians Bildergalerie im Einklang mit gegenreformatorischen Positionen stand. Denn Bilder, die ihre liturgische Funktion verloren hatten, konnten durchaus weiterhin der religiösen Erbauung dienen.

PROF. DR. MARTIN BÜCHSEL
Kunsthistorisches Institut
der Goethe-Universität,
Senckenberganlage 31, 60325 Frankfurt a. M.
buechsel@kunst.uni-frankfurt.de

Early Modern Italy's Women Artists

By Her Hand: Artemisia Gentileschi and Women Artists in Italy, 1500–1800. Ed. by Eve Straussman-Pflanzer and Oliver Tostmann with Essays and Entries by Babette Bohn, Claude-Douglas Dickerson III, Jamie Gabbarelli, Hilliard Goldfarb, Lara Lea Roney, Joaneath Spicer, Eve Straussman-Pflanzer, and Oliver Tostmann. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (30 September 2021–9 January 2022) and Detroit Institute of Arts (6 February 2022–29 May 2022). Detroit Institute of Arts, distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven/London 2021. 208 p., 132 colour, 14 b/w ill. ISBN 978-0-3002-5636-9. $ 40.00

The exhibition *By Her Hand: Artemisia Gentileschi and Women Artists in Italy, 1500–1800* handsomely contributes to the growing recognition of early-modern Italian women's cultural accomplishments through art exhibitions. The most recent ones that have focused on individuals include *A Tale of Two Women Painters: Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana* at the Museo del Prado (2019), '*La grandezza dell'universo' nell'arte di Giovanna Garzoni* at the Uffizi (2020), *Artemisia* at the National Gallery, London (2020–21), *Fede Galizia: mirabile pittoressa* at the Castello del Buonconsiglio in Trent (2021), *Elisabetta Sirani. Donna virtuosa, pittrice eroina* at the Galleria BPER Banca in Modena (2021), and *Una rivoluzione silenziosa. Plautilla Bricci pittrice e architettrice* at the Palazzo Corsini, Rome (2021–22).

Meanwhile, Lund Humphries and Getty Publications have embarked on a new series, *Illuminating Women Artists*. Like the group exhibition under review, its first subseries will be devoted to Renaissance and Baroque women artists, which was also the focus of *De dames van de barok. Vrouwelijke schilders in het Italië van de 16de en 17de eeuw* at the Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Ghent (2018), as well as *Le Signore dell'Arte. Storie di donne tra '500 e '600* at the Palazzo Reale, Milan (2021), an ambitious exhibition that occurred too late to be considered in *By Her Hand*. Surprisingly, the now-discredited approach of essentialism – that all women share common characteristics due to their sex – survives in *Le Signore dell'Arte*, where Alain Tapié, a co-curator of the exhibition, embraces the concepts of a "mano donnesca" and "femminino universale" (Barker 2021, 6). *By Her Hand* was much smaller than *Le Signore dell'Arte*, consisting of sixty-two paintings, prints, drawings and one sculpture, by eighteen women artists (plus a drawing after the Antique *hors catalogue* by Marietta Robusti), spanning two

Fig. 1 Elisabetta Sirani, Portia Wounding Her Thigh, 1664. Oil on canvas, 101 x 138 cm. Bologna, Cassa di Risparmio di Bologna (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elisabetta_Sirani_-_Portia_wounding_her_thigh.jpg; By Her Hand 2021, cat. 43)

hundred years from Sofonisba Anguissola in 1551 to Anna Bacherini Piattoli in 1776. A third of the loans came from private collections, mostly in the United States.

FAMOUS WOMEN ARTISTS

In their introduction to the catalogue, curators Eve Straussman-Pflanzer and Oliver Tostmann state that one of their aims was to counter "the historical position of women artists as a secondary or peripheral topic" (13). They decided that "we should focus on the major figures and include multiple works by important and prolific women artists, ideally done for different reasons, in a variety of genres, and in a range of media" (14f.). All of those goals were well realized, with two-thirds of the exhibition devoted to Elisabetta Sirani (ten exhibits), Anguissola (nine), Lavinia Fontana (eight), and Artemisia Gentileschi and Rosalba Carriera (seven each). For this reviewer, who saw the exhibition in Hartford where it was arranged into five rather amorphous categories, regrettably separating the works of the individual artists, only Artemisia, Giovanna Garzoni and Carriera truly rise above the notion of 'secondary'.

The history behind this flood of attention to women artists is discussed by Eve Straussman-Pflanzer in her essay, "Why Have There Been No Exhibitions of Early Modern Italian Women Artists in Hartford or Detroit?" (17–29). She traces the historiography of the literature on women artists and the development of feminist art history in Europe and the U.S., appending a list of "Italian Women Artists Exhibition History" (27). Just one of those thirty-eight exhibitions took place in Germany, *Frauen und Kunst im Mittelalter* in Wolfsburg in 1983, even though "the first publication devoted to a general history of women artists" was German, Ernst Guhl's *Die Frauen in der Kunstgeschichte* of 1858. Among the women who have written about women artists, Straussman-Pflanzer pays particular attention to Anna Jameson and Linda Nochlin. Nochlin co-curated with Ann Sutherland Harris the major exhibition *Women Artists: 1550–1950* in 1976–77, though the real break-through in understanding the

Fig. 2 Claudia del Bufalo, Portrait of Faustina del Bufalo, 1604. Oil on canvas, 105 x 88 cm. Rome, coll. Dario del Bufalo (Le Signore dell'Arte. Storie di donne tra '500 e '600, Milan 2021, cat. 1.17)

historical constraints on women artists had occurred earlier, with Nochlin's influential article, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (*Art News*, January 1971).

Despite its huge impact on the understanding of the educational and societal factors that held women artists back, Nochlin's uncomfortable yet historically sound premise is regularly disregarded, whether through tacit denial or as being passé because it buys into the category of male-constructed greatness: "The fact of the matter is", she stated, "that there have been no supremely great women artists, as far as we know, although there have been many interesting and very good ones".

The final section of Strauss-man-Pflanzer's essay (24–26) deals with prices as a gauge of perceived worth. Artemisia Gentileschi "holds the record for the highest price paid for a work by an early modern Italian women artist", € 4.7 million for a *Lucretia* in 2019, while a portrait by Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun "set

Fig. 3 Artemisia Gentileschi, Self-Portrait as a Lute Player, ca. 1615–17. Oil on canvas, 77.5 x 71.8 cm. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b7/Artemisia_Gentileschi_-_Self-Portrait_as_a_Lute_Player.JPG; By Her Hand, cat. 24)

Fig. 4 Rosalba Carriera, The Delphic Sibyl ('Allegory of Faith'), early to mid-1720s. Pastel on paper laid on canvas, 62 x 51 cm. Connecticut, private collection (By Her Hand, cat. 53)

the record for a work by a premodern woman artist", $ 7.1 million the same year. Artemisia's inflated stardom (she cannot "be considered equal in fame to Caravaggio" [24]), like her current commercial 'value', far surpasses that of her lifetime. Investigation of her 'period earnings', however, is not lacking (29, Fn. 67). They show that Artemisia earned respectable, though not exceptional fees (Spear 2005, Marshall 2005).

It is important to bear in mind when comparing prices paid for early modern paintings that value was directly linked to the hierarchy of categories, in which portraits and still lifes, regardless whether by men or women, ranked far below history painting. Value was related to size as well. In this regard, Oliver Tostmann's essay, "The Advantages of Painting Small: Italian Women Artists and the Matter of Scale" (30–41), which effectively explores how small paintings were the product of women's social and working conditions and "afforded women artists liberties they otherwise did not have" (39), might be qualified with a caution: 'The Advantages and Disadvantages of Painting Small', bearing in mind that there were exceptions when an especially fine technique, like Carlo Dolci's, brought good prices (on the connection between categories, size and prices, see Spear and Sohm 2010).

NON TANTI AFFETTI

Due to the cultural restrictions analyzed by Nochlin in her 1971 essay, few early-modern women artists became history painters. Less than half of the paintings in *By Her Hand* belong to that category (and a much smaller percentage in *Le Signore dell'Arte*), and most of those are by just three artists, Artemisia, Fontana and Sirani, all of whom, not coincidentally, were trained by their artist-fathers. Nonetheless, paintings by the latter two typically lack the emotive force that *affetti* can create, as they do in many seicento history paintings. One example is Sirani's *Portia Wounding Her Thigh* (*fig. 1*, cat. 43), described as exemplifying "the painter's invention and mastery of multifigure narrative pictures" (142). But one wonders, what is Portia thinking, what is she feeling after stabbing herself? Her lackadaisical expression undermines the impact of her painful bravery. Not just in *Portia*, but throughout Sirani's and Fontana's work (as in Orsola Maddalena Caccia's), gentle smiles relieve blank expressions and create a bland sameness. Their figures, especially their women, veil what

they think, what they feel underneath, what they desire. Only Artemisia among the women who tackled history painting mastered the art of expression by conveying deep passions.

Why did so many women painters shy away from forceful *affetti*? Not because they are innately restrained. It might, though, be due to their nurture in a culture where modesty and moderation were expected in their behavior, as recommended in various cinquecento courtesy-books. This was abundantly clear in Castiglione's widely-read *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, in which excessive behavior is deemed disagreeable and uncomely. It particularly threatens the inherent, desirable grace in women: "the pest of affectation imparts extreme ungracefulness to everything, while on the other hand simplicity and nonchalance produce the height of grace [...]. [E]legance [...] is natural and instinctive to the lady rather than forced [...]. In this way we avoid and hide affectation" (I.40f.). By "avoiding affectation" in all things, women "will perform with perfect grace the bodily exercises proper to women" (III.6). When dancing, a woman should not use "too active and violent movements"; she should not play drums or wind instruments "because their harshness hides and destroys that mild gentleness which so much adorns every act a woman does" (III.8).

The third essay in *By Her Hand*, "Art as Women's Work: The Professionalization of Women Artists in Italy, 1350–1800" (42–51), is by Sheila Barker. She provides a detailed account of women artists as members or affiliates of artists' confraternities and academies, and their evolving statutes regarding eligibility. Barker emphasizes that, well before Vasari included one woman, Properzia de' Rossi, in the first edition of *Le Vite* in 1550, women were professionally active and admitted into, or associated with, artists' organizations. "Artemisia Gentileschi [...] was not the first woman to gain entrance to Florence's artists' guild" (46), although in Florence and in the Roman Accademia di San Luca women did not partake in the academies' official activities.

ENIGMATIC CLAUDIA DEL BUFALO

Among those noblewomen who painted but whose work has mostly disappeared, Barker calls attention to Claudia del Bufalo (49f.). Only one painting by her has been identified *(fig. 2)*, a strikingly accomplished portrait signed and dated 1604. It represents her sister, Faustina, to whom it is affectionally dedicated: "All'mia Car:ma Sorella/La Sig:ra Faustina del/bufalo". The identity of the two women, however, is enigmatic. The pendant that Faustina fingers, the head of a *bufalo*, clearly alludes to the patriarchal lineage of the women, while the crescent-moon jewel in her hair, rather than denoting Diana (as interpreted in *Le Signore dell'Arte*, cat. 1.17), should refer to the Strozzi stemma with crescent moons if, as would be fitting, Claudia's and Faustina's parents were Quinzio del Bufalo and Cassandra di Lorenzo Strozzi. But neither Claudia nor Faustina is recorded among the couple's five children, nor can they be identified elsewhere in the extensive family (see De Dominicis 2017 on the del Bufalo).

Regardless of Claudia's uncertain parentage, some colorful details of her life have slipped through the art literature. In brief, she and her husband were detained on unknown charges in Rome's Tor di Nana prison in July 1596, where she was held with two other women, a courtesan, Paola Veneziana, and an ex-courtesan, Maria Fasarga. Fasarga's brother-in-law hated Maria for an assassination attempt on him and arranged to have poisoned food smuggled into the prison to kill her. When Maria shared her food with Claudia and Paola, all three fell ill, with symptoms ranging from fever, fainting, and vomiting to black tongue. Claudia and Paola were sent home for care, but Paola soon died. Maria was released afterwards on a thousand-scudi bail, but she too died (Kurzel-Runtscheiner 1995, 225, 266f.). Claudia alone survived the ordeal.

Six years after portraying Faustina, Claudia is cited in an inventory of the Casa Savelli drawn up in 1610. In the august company of works by Giorgione, Dosso and Giulio Romano displayed alongside family portraits in the *Galleria*, were two untraced paintings of *andromeda legata allo scoglio*

di mano di Claudia del bufalo and a *quadro grande di Claudia del bufalo, che rappresenta li omini mag.ri di casa Savelli* (Spezzaferro 1985, 72, nos. 48, 50). The latest known document naming Claudia is dated 8 June 1616. Then widowed, she rented from Curzio Sergardi a "casa sotto Palazzo S. Marco" for forty-six scudi a year (Borello n. d., tavola 3), a reasonable sum for lodgings in a good Roman neighborhood. (I am indebted to Rossella Lorenzi for generously sharing with me her own research on this elusive noblewoman.)

BEYOND THEIR SEX

With essentialism rejected, a major challenge in an exhibition such as *By Her Hand* is finding meaningful unity beyond the sex of artists who lived two hundred years apart, worked in various Italian centers, came from disparate backgrounds, were differently trained, and whose paintings belong to separate categories of art. For this reason, exhibitions focused on individual women painters generally have been more fruitful from a scholarly perspective than group exhibitions, whose substantial contribution is making the public aware that many talented women artists indeed existed. Complementing the three essays, a team of eight authors wrote the informative catalogue entries in *By Her Hand*, which largely focus on the customary issues of attribution, provenance, identity of sitters, and occasionally on technique, with perceptive observations by Oliver Tostmann on Garzoni's and Carriera's meticulous and miraculous procedures (cat. 35, 54–57).

Still many questions about works by women artists remain open. Why, as C.D. Dickerson asks, were medals struck honoring Fontana and Gentileschi (cat. 31–32), but not one for their famous male contemporaries in Rome? Who commissioned them? Were they a marketing strategy? More generally, who bought art made by women, and why? Did the professional men who hired Fontana to portray them do so because of her perceived talent, her prices, and/or the *frisson* of being painted by a woman? Fontana's *Stoning of St Stephen* (cat. 19), like Anguissola's and Sirani's subservient positions under their guardian fathers, offered a missed opportunity to discuss the status of single and married women and the legal constraints on women who were professionals. Raffaella Morselli has observed that the contract for Fontana's *Stoning of St Stephen* recognized the painter's talent, yet her "professionalism was not, to the point that Zappi had to guarantee his wife's work. Her career and earnings were managed entirely by her husband" (Morselli in Spear and Sohm 2010, 159f.). After Fontana married, she switched from signing *Lavina Fontana Virgo* to a deferential form, *Fontana de Zappis*. Anguissola, however, signed her *Holy Family with Saints* (cat. 8) *Sofonisba Lomelino et Anguissola pinsit 1592*, giving equal weight to her birth and married names. Her uncommon inscription might have prompted discussion of the ways in which women signed their work and the exceptional frequency of their signatures.

Hartford's recently-acquired *Self-Portrait as a Lute Player* by Artemisia *(fig. 3)*, the most arresting of three interrelated paintings that were displayed side-by-side (cat. 24–26), foremost depicts a female musician. While there is no way of knowing Artemisia's thinking behind her unusual conception, it is likely that she knew about the considerable success of many female musicians, notably Francesca Caccini, who wrote the first opera by a woman, was a *virtuosa* singer, and played the lute. By the 1620s, she had become the best-paid musician at the Medici court. Artemisia's relationship with Caccini has been suggestively discussed by Mary Garrard (Garrard 2020, 105–111; also Roman n. d.), who believes, though it is unproven, that Artemisia performed in Caccini's *Ballo delle zingare* and that she is dressed as a gypsy in her self-portrait.

Caccini was not unique among female musicians who earned big salaries. Laura Peverara, the leading musician in the famous late-cinquecento group of *virtuose* singers in Ferrara known as the *concerto delle dame* (among other instruments, they also played the lute), earned three hundred scudi a year, housing for her family,

and was given a ten-thousand scudi dowry (Macy 1992, 95). The Florence-trained madrigalist, lutenist and mezzo-soprano Maddalena Casulana (ca. 1544–ca. 1590) became the first female composer to have an entire book of her music published. An outspoken early feminist (she should be added to Artemisia's "community of women" discussed by Garrard 2020), Casulana dedicated some of her music to Isabella de' Medici. She wrote to Isabella that she would like "to show [...] the world (as much as is allowed me in this musical profession) the conceited error of men. They believe so strongly to be the masters of the high gifts of the intellect that, in their opinions, these gifts cannot likewise be shared by Women" (LaMay 2002, 41). Could these accomplished and well-paid female musicians have been in Artemisia's mind when, pursuing Medici patronage, she decided to fashion herself as a performing musician instead of making art?

ATTRIBUTIONS AND IDENTIFICATIONS

The curators of *By Her Hand*, in order "to invigorate connoisseurial debate" (16), included a few works whose attributions are unsettled. For this reviewer, the *Self-Portrait at the Easel* (cat. 3) is unlikely to be from Anguissola's hand, nor is the *Self-Portrait* (cat. 4), ascribed to her with caution. That *A Vase of Flowers on a Table* is by Orsola Maddalena Caccia is rightly questioned in the catalogue (cat. 33). Although signed and dated 1665, Sirani's *Portrait of Anna Maria Ranuzzi as Charity* (cat. 44) is a repetition of the superior version in Bologna (both are signed and dated 1665). In light of the qualitative difference between the paintings and that they would constitute the unique example of supposedly autograph versions by the artist, it should have been mentioned that the Ranuzzi further owned a copy of the original. During 1664, the year earlier, Sirani painted on average a work every ten days. Over the course of her short ten-year career, she produced over two hundred paintings which, together with the frequency with which her paintings were copied, accounts for her uneven œuvre and its attendant connoisseurial challenges.

Among numerous works in *By Her Hand* that have never been exhibited before, a set of four large pastels by Rosalba Carriera is outstanding. Two were on view when the show opened (cat. 52–53) and the others will follow, *hors catalogue*. Oliver Tostmann provides an excellent discussion of the set, focusing on their iconography. Variously interpreted as allegories, sibyls, or muses, he reasons that the one called an *Allegory of Faith* makes an odd companion to sibyls or muses. Convincingly, he sees all four as muses, although the one crowned with thorns *(fig. 4)*, which he calls the Samian, more likely is the Delphic. Those two sibyls have been confused in the past, such as in a print by Gilles Rousselet and Abraham Bosse after a drawing by Claude Vignon (Art Institute, Chicago); and in a print by Crispijn de Passe and a painting derived from it (Chastleton House, Oxfordshire), where the muse with a crown of thorns is identified as the Samian. Yet, in another print by Crispijn de Passe, the muse with a crown of thorns is called the Delphic, which seems right. The Samian's usual Christological prophecy is that "the rich one shall be born a pure virgin", while the Delphic's is that "the prophet born of the virgin shall be crowned with thorns".

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PROF. DR. RICHARD E. SPEAR
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
rspear@umd.edu

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