

# ***"Multiple Vantage Points"***

## ***Education Packet***

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### **A Free Packet Containing:**

- Preview Discussion Points**
- Gender Stereotypes Exercise**
- Discrimination Against Women  
in the Art World Handout**
- Viewing Assignment**
- After-Viewing Art Activity**
- Art Resource List**

This packet is produced in conjunction with the exhibition, *Multiple Vantage Points: Southern California Women Artists, 1980-2006* that is on view at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park from February 25 through April 15, 2007. The exhibit is presented and sponsored by the Southern California Women's Caucus for Art, the Southern California Council of the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs. It is part of The Feminist Art Project, a national initiative recognizing the aesthetic and intellectual impact of women on the visual arts and culture. An illustrated catalog with an introductory essay is available and education and docent-led tours can be arranged by request. Additional information can be found online at [scwca.org](http://scwca.org).

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*Women's Caucus  
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2-28-07

Dear Teacher, Parent, Guardian,

This packet was designed for a wide age range. Pick and choose the exercises that work best for your group and feel free to modify them to meet your needs.

To help plan your *Multiple Vantage Points: Southern California Women Artists, 1980-2006* tour, especially with younger students, it might be helpful to know that there are a few nudes in the exhibit of over 100 art pieces. You may want to talk to your students about the beauty, complexity, and value of the unclothed human body in artwork beforehand. Advance dialogue can help to pre-empt immature but entirely natural behavior considering our cultural values regarding nudity.

This can be a worthwhile endeavor; it can be startling for young people to see nudes without insulting sexual connotations or objectification and exciting for them to reclaim the loveliness of the human form, true and perfect in its many shapes and sizes. However, you may choose to restrict your tour to the rooms that don't have nudes (ask staff members at the gallery) or, tell your students that certain paintings are off limits for the Viewing Assignment. You know best the maturity level of your students.

I hope that you and the young people you bring enjoy the *Multiple Vantage Point* exhibit and that the activities suggested in this Education Packet deepen their viewing experience. Feel free to photocopy these pages for use in your classroom and use these activities when teaching related subject matter.

I'd love to hear about your experiences! Please contact me at [kesakivel@earthlink.net](mailto:kesakivel@earthlink.net) with your feedback, comments, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Kesa Kivel  
SCWCA Youth Outreach Chair  
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# Preview Discussion Points

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## **Objective:**

Students will explore why there's a lack of well-known women artists and the value of having a women-only art show.

## **Supplies Needed:**

Butcher paper, marker

## **Introduction:**

Note: The sentences in italics are possible answers that your students might offer.

Tell your students; You're going to be seeing an exhibit called *Multiple Vantage Points*, featuring 50 Southern California women artists. Why do you think there's a women-only show?

*Possible answers include: because of past discrimination, it's unfair to only show women's art, they don't know.*

Lets explore this further by taking a few minutes to brainstorm and list the names of artists. After you've offered a name and it's written down, please wait until several other people have offered names before you add another. Then, you'll all have a chance to participate!

First of all, lets brainstorm and list the names of male artists that you can think of.

Teacher writes down names of male artists.

Now lets brainstorm and list the female artists that you can think of.

Teacher writes down names of female artists.

If there were more male names than female names (a likely result), ask the students why they think their list had more males. Possible answers include: *We weren't taught about them in school, women aren't good artists, they don't know.*

Whether or not you had many women listed, it's important to know that women were often excluded from the art world in the past, and that even today, there's a lot of discrimination that women experience, just because of their gender. There's also discrimination against women in other places including the workforce, where women sometimes receive less money than men for the exact same job. Lets explore (using the Writing Exercise on Stereotypes) the perceived differences between girls and boys and see how it relates to gender stereotypes, discrimination against women in the art world, and the *Multiple Vantage Points* exhibition.

# Writing Exercise on Stereotypes

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## Objectives:

Students will learn about **stereotypes**; current stereotypes and stereotypes about women that existed in the art world in the past and in the present.

Students will define **discrimination** and be able to give examples of how women artists have been discriminated against in the art world.

They will explore how stereotyping and discrimination affect people and the value of having a women-only art exhibition.

**Supplies Needed:** Writing paper, pens, butcher paper (if there's no board), marker

## Introduction:

Write "Girls are..." and "Boys are..." on butcher paper. Define **stereotype** (an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or gender, which is usually negative). Define **discrimination** (unfair treatment of one person or group, usually because of lack of knowledge or inaccurate stereotypes).

-Ask students to brainstorm answers to "Girls are..." as you list their answers on the butcher paper. Examples: girls are polite, passive, mean to each other, good listeners, sweet, girls like the color pink, girls don't like math etc.

-Ask students to brainstorm answers to "Boys are..." Examples: boys are strong, athletic, adventuresome, in control, domineering, likely to succeed, boys don't cry etc.

-Ask students to determine which ones are stereotypes.

-Can they think of someone they either know or know about who **counters** (goes against) these stereotypes?

-What if it was said that, "Many girls like pink, but some don't" instead of making an oversimplified generalization that all girls like pink?

## Discuss:

What is the effect of stereotyping girls just because they're female?

What is the effect of stereotyping boys just because they're male?

Are stereotypes restricting?

Have you ever been stereotyped? What happened? How did it make you feel?

## Reading Assignment:

Ask your students to do a read-around (each student reads one section out loud) of the "Discrimination Against Women" handout (included).

## Writing Assignment (based on the handout):

Many women artists in the past were told that they couldn't create art because they were female. Females were **stereotyped** as being incapable of being serious artists. They were **discriminated** against when they were denied entrance into art schools and guilds. Students write on, Do you think gender discrimination in the art world is fair? Why/Why Not? Why do you suppose that a women-only exhibition like *Multiple Vantage Points* was created? Please explain.

# Discrimination Against Women in the Art World

## Examples from the Middle Ages to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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In the past there was a common belief that an artist must be a male and that great art came from genius, rather than a combination of talent and supportive social conditions. Some examples of the ways that women were not supported include:

-Women weren't allowed the kind of education they needed to become good artists. For instance, it was considered improper (from the period of the Renaissance through the nineteenth century) for them to draw from male nudes. So, women couldn't use models to learn about human anatomy. For instance if you never saw a bare arm, how could you paint it accurately?

-For a long time women found it difficult if not impossible to gain entrance into the best art schools.

-Because they weren't considered serious artists, if they did go to school, they could only take beginning classes.

-Most women weren't allowed to take examinations to prove their expertise or permitted to enter art competitions.

-Most of the small number of women who succeeded in the art world were daughters of artist-fathers or had some close relationship with an artist. Then they could learn about art materials and techniques from them without attending art school.

-Women did create artistic products such as crafts, but they were often undervalued compared to male-dominated world of visual arts (like paintings).

-Crafts like lace making, weaving, and embroidery, which were acceptable for women to make, were not typically signed; therefore no credit could be given to the woman who made them.

-During the Middle Ages, women of high status were allowed to do book illuminations. These were decorated books with beautiful handwork, which were also often unsigned.

-In the Medieval and Renaissance periods, some women worked in the art or sculpture workshops headed by a man, usually the woman's father. The man directed the work and got credit for work done in his studio.

-During the Middle Ages (c. 500 - 1400) and Renaissance (c. 1400 - 1600) in Europe the guild system was in place. Art guilds were organizations of artists that educated students and were available for art commissions. Girls couldn't participate in guilds until the late sixteenth century.

-Sometimes, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, work done by a woman was said to be done by a man (to increase its value). For instance a painting by Judith Leyster was incorrectly said to be created by Frans Hals.

### **Evidence of discrimination against women in the art world continues to this day:**

-For example: Galleries show fewer female artists than male artists and male artists generally receive more money for their artwork.

-Gender bias still exists among art collectors, as the female painter, Rogue Simpson, recently learned. A gallery director told her about a male art collector who came in and was immediately attracted to one of her paintings. The art collector said, "Tell me about this!" and the gallery director told him, 'that artist is one of our best-but he's a she.' The man turned around and walked out. \*

-The most widely used art textbook in the world for U.S art and liberal arts students is H.W. Janson's History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day, which has been in print since 1962. Of the 3,900 artists named in Janson's, none were women-zero-until feminist protest a few years ago. The 500-plus-page textbook now mentions 38 women artist, in addition to the 3,900 men. \*

-In blind juried shows, where **the gender of entrants is unknown**, women's works are chosen **54%** of the time (to men's 46%); but in invitational shows **where the gender is known**, women's works are chosen **16.7%** of the time (to men's 83.3%). \*

#### **Resources:**

*Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, Westview Press, 1988 by Linda Nochlin, from the article entitled, *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* pp.147-158.

*Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists of the West?* Sarah E. Boehme

From Wikipedia: google *Educating Women Artists*

"Art-Talk" newspaper quotes, August/September 2005 \*

# Viewing Assignment

Choose one piece of art to look at carefully. What attracts you to this artwork?

What emotions or thoughts do you think that the artwork is trying to communicate? Why do you think that?

All of the artwork in the exhibition is done by women. Do you think there's one point or multiple points of view that women offer? Do you see any gender or other stereotypes in the exhibition?

Does the exhibit of 50 Southern California artists surprise you in any way? Why?

What have you learned from this exhibit?

# -Timeline Art Activity- A Celebration of Women's Achievements in the U.S. From the 1800s to 2000



**1800s**

**1900s**

**2000s**

## **Objective:**

Students will highlight women's achievements between the 1800s to 2000 by creating a Timeline, then display it (in their school, community center, or local library etc.) to educate the public.

## **Supplies Needed:**

Long piece of butcher paper and colorful markers. Optional: Multicultural images of women for a border around the timeline, glue, different art materials like fabric to decorate the timeline.

## **Art Ideas:**

- Add the accomplishments of women you know on the timeline, or if you're female, add your own name and accomplishments. You don't have to be famous to be important!
- Add women that you are studying about to the timeline. How will you artistically represent each woman?
- Instead of a straight line, use a tree limb, an arrow, or footprints to mark the horizontal line.
- Use some of the art styles you've seen in the Multiple Vantage Points Exhibit to decorate the timeline.
- Create a collage-style border of women's images from magazines around the edges.

Consider listing the following women's names and organizations to your timeline and, do your own research. There are many interesting women and women's organizations beside that few that are well known!

## **1800s:**

1832-A group of free black women form the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Salem Massachusetts. Black women organize for social change!

1848-The first women's rights convention in the U.S. is held in Seneca Falls, New York. Women working together make a difference!

1851-Former slave Sojourner Truth gives her most famous speech "Ain't I a Woman" at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.

1872-Victoria Woodhull is the first woman to campaign for the U.S. presidency.

Late 1800s-The women's auxiliaries of the Mutual Aid Societies (mutualistas) are formed. Women's auxiliaries assist the Mexican American community with education, social and cultural events, and community service projects to form a supportive network and cope with widespread discrimination.

1881-Clara Barton starts the American Red Cross, which she led for 22 years.

1892-Ida B. Wells launches her nationwide anti-lynching campaign.

### **1900s:**

1903-The Women's Trade Union League is formed to work for an eight-hour workday, minimum wages, and women's suffrage.

1920-The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ratified to give women the right to vote. However, women of color (and men of color) couldn't vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

1962-Dolores Huerta helps found the United Farm Workers.

1962-Rachel Caron's book *Silent Spring* is published, sparking the environmental movement.

1965-Black women (and black men) can vote after Congress passes the Voting Rights Act.

1967-A feminist organization starts the first consciousness-raising group to empower women through self-knowledge. Groups spring up across the country.

1973-Attorney and civil rights activist, Vilma S. Martinez, was elected president and general counsel of Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

1976-Chien-Shiung Wu was awarded the National Medal of Science. Her specialty was the study of the movement of atomic particles.

1977-Rosalyn Sussman Yalow won the Nobel Prize in medicine. She helped discover how to use radioisotopes to measure levels of tiny amounts of hormones in the human blood system.

1979-The artist Judy Chicago's art piece "The Dinner Party," a representation of women's history, was exhibited in San Francisco in 1979.

1981-Maya Lin, the 21-year-old Chinese-American architectural design student won the competition to design to Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.

1987-Wilma Mankiller is the first woman to be elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

1993-Ellen Ochoa becomes the first Latina woman in space on the *Discovery*.

1997-Sarah McLachlan launches the first Lilith Fair, a transnational women's music festival.

### **2000s:**

Work in progress!

# Art Resource List

## Films

**“Women Artists, The Other Side of the Picture”** from Film for the Humanities and Sciences (800-257-5126). This 54 minutes color film talks about the lack of women artists from various points of view including the Guerilla Girls, individual women artists, and both male and female “voices of authority”.

### **“Girl House Art Project” DVD**

This 16-minute film documents the last month of the 10-month YWCA Santa Monica / Westside “Girl House Art Project”, inspired by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro’s 1972 “Womanhouse” art installation. The Public Exhibition was held in June 2006, showcasing feminist art by middle school girls. Free DVDs plus Study Guides are available (contact Kesa Kivel at kesakivel@earthlink.net).

## Books

**Exhibiting Student Art, The Essential Guide for Teachers** by David Burton (2006). This is an excellent practical guide for exhibiting art that emphasizes an active role for students through an empowering, collaborative process.

**Art on My Mind, Visual Politics** by bell hooks. The author talks about producing, exhibiting, and critiquing art with special focus on the black struggle in the art world.

**The Power of Feminist Art**, edited by Normal Broude and Mary D. Garrard. This book documents the feminist art movement including feminist art education programs, publications, and women artists through an assortment of photos, essays, and interviews.

### Books for Young People (8-12 years of age)

**Frida Kahlo**, Artists in Their Time Series by Scholastic by Jill A. Laidaw. A Franklin Watts book.

**Georgia O’Keeffe**, Artists in Their Time Series by Scholastic by Ruth Thomson. A Franklin Watts book.