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## Female Artist in European Fine Arts: Gender and Professional Status

**Abstract.** The place of women in art as artists and professionals has long been determined by strict social restrictions and a subordinate role in society. Historically discriminatory nature of women's artistic expression was conditioned by the non-perception of women as artists and professionals. However, these issues, along with the gender status of women artists, have not received sufficient attention from art historians. The purpose of the study is to reveal the preconditions, special features of the formation and development and social (gender) perception of the creativity of women artists in the European fine arts of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (based on the example of French women artists). The following methods are used in the investigation: historical, cultural and interdisciplinary methods, comparative analysis, generalisation and systematisation, aimed at highlighting the role of women artists in the fine arts and determining the technical and technological features used in the used in the works of the female artists. The study highlights the process of formation of artists as professionals in painting and sculpture, covering the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. A review of the genre preferences of the artists reveals that most often they turned to portraiture, miniature and decorative decoration. The study outlines the stages of change in social norms and relationships during the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which impacted both the level of art and cultural exchange and the professional activities of women artists. During this period, a growing number of major pieces on religious and mythological motifs, depictions of large battle scenes and nudes appeared, while an overview of the heritage of French women artists of this period reveals the conventionality of gender distinctions. The scientific novelty of the study is based on determining the specifics of women's creative practice in the history of European art, highlighting the ways of formation of a female artist as a professional and artist in the fine arts of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (on the example of French artists) and evaluating their art through the prism of gender identification in historical retrospect

**Keywords:** female artist, gender issue, culture, art, painting, sculpture

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### INTRODUCTION

During the cultural development of mankind, the place of women in art for a long time was subjected to severe social restrictions primarily because of its subordinate role in society. For many centuries, representatives of the "fair sex" were allowed to exist only "next to" art, while creativity was the domain of men. In particular, in fine arts, women were assigned the role of muse/model, faithful wife/patron of the artist, but not the creator. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a woman could be professionally engaged in

painting only if she was involved in the artistic sphere. The most reliable way for an artist to advance her career was if she was either the daughter of an artist or came from a wealthy family that could pay for her art education. The creative work of artists was often criticised by contemporaries and was limited to certain genres: portrait, still life, and landscape [1]. Sculpting or working with marble was generally considered to be a purely male affair, prohibiting any impulses on the part of female craftswomen.

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However, outstanding artists have repeatedly proved their talent and professionalism by engaging in monumental or easel painting or sculpture.

There are no obvious restrictions in the genre preferences of these female artists, compared to the works of men, but most often women turned to portraiture, miniature (in painting, sculpture and carving), and were engaged in decorative decoration. However, in the history of art of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there are examples of works on religious themes created by such artists as Lavinia Fontana, Catherine of Bologna, Plautilla Nelli and Propertia de Rossi. In the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a growing number of major paintings on religious and mythological subjects, depictions of large battle scenes and the naked human figure, authored by women, appeared, which was ethically considered absolutely unacceptable and indecent for female artists [2]. However, these issues, along with the gender status of women artists, have not received sufficient attention from art historians.

The discriminatory nature of women's artistic creativity was historically conditioned by the non-perception of women as artists and professionals. After all, a woman's creative activity in any type of art was treated as housework, entertainment or hobby. However, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there are known names of artists who challenged the generally accepted notion of female artists as amateurs (Sofonisba Angrisolla, Marietta Robusti, Artemisia Gentileschi, etc.) [1]. However, only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the environment for the formation of women in art as professionals was established, and their more active recognition in different European countries took place in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This process was determined by both the gradual change in social status and the expansion of the feminist movement in Europe [1]. During this period, a pleiad of brilliant European masters of the brush was formed, including Rosa Boner, Marie-Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Angelica Kaufman, Mary Moser, Marianne North, Elizabeth Siddal and others [3]. Thus, both in the context of gender issues and beyond them, the artistic activity of a female artist in terms of its perception and objective interpretation in society requires critical study.

Almost until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, art critics paid almost no attention to the work of female artists. An isolated case of significant historical and critical value is the five-volume edition of the biography of famous painters, sculptors, and architects by the outstanding artist Giorgio Vasari [4], which contains information about female artists. In modern times, there were published works devoted to the life and work of outstanding female artists of the world and those historical circumstances in which their talent was developed. Notable publications of recent years, the authors of which touch upon the creative achievements of women in the history of fine arts, are the book "15 women who made art and made history (in that Order)" [5], book-album "I love women in art" [6], encyclopedia book "Women artists: Art essentials" [7], the book-Project "Art and feminism" [8]. A number of materials reveal aspects of gender issues in art: "Gender theory and art" [9], "Feminism art theory. An anthology: 1968-2014" [10], "Reclaiming female agency: Feminist art history after postmodernism" [11], "Artists, muses, patrons of art" [12].

The relevance of the subject of the study is determined by: 1) insufficient attention to the issues of assessing the creativity of women artists in the European fine arts in Ukrainian art criticism; 2) the need for research aimed at generalizing the patterns and stylistic features of women's artistic creativity in the context of the development of European fine arts; 3) the need to explore the features of the evolution of women's creativity for the theoretical substantiation of the perception of the figure of a woman as an artist.

*The purpose of the study* is to determine the specific features of the social (gender) status of female artists in the European fine arts; to reveal the prerequisites for the formation and development of the creative work of female artists of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (on the example of French artists).

*The stated objective* is aimed at solving several tasks: firstly, to evaluate the art of female artists through the prism of gender identification in historical retrospect; secondly, to identify the specifics of creative practice and the formation of a woman artist as a professional and artist in the French fine arts of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*The scientific novelty* of the study is based on determining the specifics of women's creative practice in the history of European art, highlighting the ways of formation of a female artist as a professional and artist in the fine arts of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (on the example of French artists) and evaluating their art through the prism of gender identification in historical retrospect.

### ***Social status of female artists in the visual arts: A historical retrospective***

Throughout the history of fine arts, women have existed alongside prominent artists, although their artistic contribution was not inferior to that of men. Dating back to the Renaissance, under different social and political circumstances in various European countries (England, Holland, Italy, Germany, France), there have been a variety of approaches to the interpretation of women as individuals and professional women's activities, in particular in the fine arts: biological, gender-role and social-constructivist approaches, and to a lesser extent the theological interpretation of the figure of a woman in everyday life [1]. This is related to the fact that over the course of history, the symbolic load of the image of a woman artist gradually changed, and evolved, transforming the value and moral standards of society. Historically acute issues of gender inequality remain relevant today. Over the past centuries, this was caused by both the general level and technical and social conditions of life and opportunities for self-development and self-identification of women.

The approach to art as a manifestation of the human world suggests that this is where the formation and development of certain "gender behaviour scenarios" takes place: culturally and artistically defined characteristics, functions, and activities that determine the social relations of women and men at certain times in certain societies [13]. This is reflected in various aspects of life, starting with appearance and clothing, which affects communication methods, the arrangement and selection of work or leisure, the establishment of internal and external family obligations, intimate

relationships, etc. Painting and sculpture are the types of art that reflect different moments of a person's life, their external and internal state. Thus, artistic creativity is like a projection of "gender roles" in relation to the diverse life experiences of a person, which influenced access to education, health care and work, even life expectancy and freedom of movement.

Today, it is quite common for us that women can work professionally in the field of art and art without any restrictions. However, until almost the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such freedom of perception of women's creativity was practically impossible. This was determined not only by the social canons of society but was also a manifestation of certain gender segregation, as a long-standing consequence of giving men as professional artists priority in art. Motivated women managed to reach the same level as male artists, who fought for the right to their own vision and self-expression or at least for professional art education.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the question of women's protest and emancipation was raised by researcher and art historian Linda Nochlin. In the essay "Why have there been no great women artists?" (1971) she attempted to give an answer to this question. Nochlin argues that the success of famous male artists is primarily due to the fact that women did not have free access to art education [14]. Indeed, according to the established educational traditions in European culture, mastering art was possible only by inheriting knowledge or learning from famous artists. Both ways for a woman, given her social status, civic duties and rights of the time, were an exceptional case, not to mention the inability to attend art schools. In this regard, L. Nochlin draws attention to the value priorities of education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "It was much more valuable for a girl to do several things decently than to demonstrate mastery in one thing". Besides, many philosophers and theorists of culture and art categorically refused to admit that women can be geniuses at all, arguing that they are emotional, sensitive and soft [14]. For example, the famous German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer expressed the opinion that women have no inclination to art, and if they do, it is more like "monkeying around" for the purpose of coquetry [13].

Another circumstance that did not give women the opportunity to compete with men was the prohibition for artists to paint nudes (it was believed that this was a manifestation of inappropriate behaviour and debauchery and had a bad effect on others, especially on the upbringing of children), which was practised almost until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, it is worth mentioning the well-known social restrictions that controlled the life of women in society: moderate diet, modest clothing, high morality and obedience were valued much higher than originality, freedom and creativity. So, until the twentieth century, the generally accepted model of "femininity" did not imply the possibility of freely and openly creating and "expressing" by means of any, including fine art.

The question of revising the rights and duties of women in society naturally arose at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the context of revolutionary events in Europe (the French Revolution, the Carbonari movement in Italy,

the revolutionary events in Germany), as well as active discussions on civil rights and freedom (especially after the adoption of the "Married Women's Property Act" [15]). One of the components of this process was the manifestos of the first feminists in Europe: O. de Gouges ("Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen", 1791), E. Adler ("Famous Women of the French Revolution of 1789-1795") and M. Wollstonecraft ("Vindication of the Rights of Woman") [16]. The authors of the manifestos put forward demands for women to have the right to vote, the right to inherit property, the right to education, work, creativity, freedom of expression, etc. Thus, during the nineteenth century, there was a noticeable transformation in women's identity, which resulted in the possibility for women to receive higher education, professionalisation of women's activities/creativity, active participation of women in the political movement, intensive development of literature and social trend for reading, which manifested itself in women's participation in intellectual debates and discussions, etc.

During this period, the recognition of women from a professional point of view was somewhat paradoxical. For instance, in 1768 the Royal Academy of Arts was founded in England, headed by two prominent artists Angelica Kaufman and Mary Moser, but for 160 years only men studied in this institution [3]. This fact suggests that the question of the "secondary importance" of women's creativity remained open until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the feminist movement and the emancipation of women in Europe finally changed social conditions and attitudes towards women. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the active work of suffragettes influenced not only the social but also the political sphere, which was reflected in the artworks of craftswomen in various artistic directions. The artists aimed to be not an object of contemplation, but a contemplator, to reflect their sphere of interests in art, in particular, to observe themselves [3].

The struggle for the recognition of women in the artistic environment at this time was directed against the dominance of male artists and the representation of their work in art exhibitions and in museum collections. This was reflected in the second half of the twentieth century when America gradually introduced women's paintings to exhibitions and galleries. Thus, in 1977, one of the major museums in New York hosted an exhibition "Artists: 1550-1950", dedicated to the work of women only. The exhibition featured works by 83 artists from 12 countries and was curated by two women, one of whom was Linda Nochlin. The scale of the exhibition was first demonstrated by the number of artists in the history of art [13].

Today, the severity of the problem of gender equality is almost removed, although in some places conservative views still take place. Despite the fact that during the twentieth century, women artists won the right to engage in the visual practice, study theory, implement artistic initiatives, receive prestigious art awards and arrange shows of their works in the most famous art galleries, there is ample evidence that the works of men artists are valued higher than those of women artists. For example, in the list of the world's most expensive paintings to sell at auction, compiled by one of the main analytical resources of The Art Market ArtNet, there is not a single work created by a female

artist [17]. The most expensive painting by a woman was Georgia O'Keeffe's "Weed" ("White Flower No. 1") (Fig. 1), which sold in 2014 for 44.4 million. For comparison, the most expensive work by a male artist sold at auction in 2019 (Leonardo da Vinci, "Salvator Mundi") (Fig. 2) was



**Figure 1.** J. O'Keeffe's "Weed"

Source: [17].

estimated at \$ 450.3 million. So the issue is not the relative talent of "female" and "male" art, but the fact that the latter has been institutionalised for much longer. Last but not least, this affects not only its cost but also its overall perception [17].



**Figure 2.** Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi"

#### ***Features of the creative practice of female artists in France of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries***

The process of recognition and affirmation of the art of women artists as equal to men's begins in Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is most apparent in Paris. During that period, this European capital was the cultural Mecca of Europe, where the French school of painting flourished. Naturally, many artists came there, and with the support of patrons, they could discover their talents and gain success. One of the outstanding figures of the French School of a painting of that time was **Marie-Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun** (1755-1842), who became famous as a master of the portrait genre [3].

The formation of the young artist was influenced by the family, which frequently hosted famous artists and writers. It was the reign of Louis XV, and courtly interactions, sophisticated humour, and brilliant discourses about art determined the style of the artist's further life and work. Her painting style was particularly tender and sensitive. Contemporaries described Vigée-Lebrun's paintings as "poetry of the heart" [18]. The artist always depicted her

clients in advantageous poses and elegant outfits, which (along with her extraordinary talent as a painter) earned her the favour of the European aristocracy. Queen Marie Antoinette especially admired her ceremonial portraits.

During the French Revolution (1789), Vigée Le Brun had to leave France [18]. She lived in Russia for six years, which greatly influenced her style. Portraits created in the Russian period are characterised by greater simplicity, sincerity and lack of bright mannerisms inherent in a number of portraits of the French period. In addition to the portrait genre, the artist also painted various landscapes, but they were not highly acclaimed. Altogether, during her long life, Vigée Le Brun painted 662 portraits, 16 paintings and 15 landscapes. Among the artist's works, the most prominent are her own self-portraits (1782, 1786, 1790) (Fig. 3), portraits of the French Queen Marie Antoinette (1783, 1787) (Fig. 4), Russian Empress Maria Feodorovna (1799), Elizabeth Alekseevna Razumovskaya (1798, 1801) (Fig. 5), Polish King Stanislaw Poniatowski (1797) (Fig. 6), Napoleon's sister Caroline Murat with her daughter (1807), etc.



**Figure 3.** Self-portrait in a Straw Hat (1790)



**Figure 4.** Marie Antoinette in a Chemise Dress (1783)



**Figure 5.** Portrait Of Elizabeth Alexeievna



**Figure 6.** Portrait of Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski

**Source:** [18]

Another famous French artist of the Empire era, the author of the portrait genre, miniatures and genre works of the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries was **Constance Mayer** (Marie-Françoise Constance La Martinière, 1775-1821), who began to paint at the age of 20. Studying under Joseph-Benoît Suvet and Jean-Baptiste Grez, who headed the school of painting for girls, she learned the style of soft strokes and, like her teachers, created mostly sentimental

scenes [19]. Mayer painted portraits of women and children, family scenes, self-portraits and miniatures of her father. (Fig. 7). She attained a degree of success by exhibiting "Self-Portrait of Citizenness Mayer Pointing to a Sketch for a Portrait of Her Mother" at the Paris Salon of 1795. In 1801, she exhibited "Self-Portrait with Artist's Father: He Points to a Bust of Raphael, Inviting Her to Take This Celebrated Painter as a Model" (Fig. 8). In the same year, she joined the studio of

Jacques-Louis David, from whom she adopted a direct and simple style, but continued to depict sentimental scenes [19]. Since 1802, K. Mayer worked in the workshop of Pierre-Paul Proud'hon, with whom she had a close relationship. During the period of cooperation with Proud'hon, Mayer

emulated certain features of his painting style, creating several paintings in collaboration. The change in the artist's individual style of painting became noticeable in 1804, at the same time her paintings began to receive greater recognition in the salons of Paris and among the aristocracy.



**Figure 7.** Self-portrait

**Source:** [19]

As was often the case with the oeuvre of women artists who were associated with more famous male artists, many of Mayer's works were attributed to Proud'hon due to confusion over her creative contribution at the time of their creation. After all, the two artists collaborated on the same works for a long time: Proud'hon made sketches and compositions, and Mayer completed them. Many of the paintings that were exhibited under her name were later attributed to Proud'hon or vice versa. For instance, "The Sleep of Venus and Cupid" now attributed to Mayer was initially attributed to Proud'hon.

One of the most successful painters of animals of the nineteenth century and an extraordinary figure was **Rosa Bonheur** (Marie-Rosalie Bonheur, 1822-1899). In the development of Rose as a master of painting, a huge role was played by her father, Raymond Boehner, a landscape artist and her first and only teacher [5]. The artist inherited the academic style of painting from him. For a more precise and detailed understanding of the anatomy of animals, the artist studied their anatomy, visited slaughterhouses, and was engaged in dissection at the National Veterinary Institute, while creating outlines and sketches



**Figure 8.** Self-Portrait with Artist's Father: He Points to a Bust of Raphael, Inviting Her to Take This Celebrated Painter as a Model

of future paintings. In 1841, at the age of nineteen, she first exhibited her paintings in a Parisian salon. In 1845, she received a 3rd place bronze medal, and in 1848 – the 1st place gold medal for the painting "Beef and Bulls, a Cantal breed". In 1865, Empress Eugenie of France awarded Rosa Boehner the Legion of Honour [5].

The recognition in France came to the artist for the painting "Plowing in Nivernais" (1849). The monumental and most significant work of the young Rosa Boehner was the painting "Horse Fair" (1852-1855) (Fig. 9), on which animals and people were depicted in life-size (dimensions: 244.5 × 506.7). This work brought the author worldwide recognition and fame. Other outstanding works were the paintings "The Highland Shepherd" (1859) (Fig. 10), "Scottish Raid" ("Highland Raid", 1860), the portrait "Buffalo Bill" (1889) (Fig. 11), "On the hunt" (1887) and others. At the end of the nineteenth century, outside of France, the artist's paintings, depicting the life of animals, acquired considerable popularity in America and England. Thus, Boehner often came to the UK, where, at the invitation of Queen Victoria, she arranged a private screening of the painting "Horse Fair" in Windsor [5].



Figure 9. Horse Fair



Figure 10. The Highland Shepherd



Figure 11. Buffalo Bill

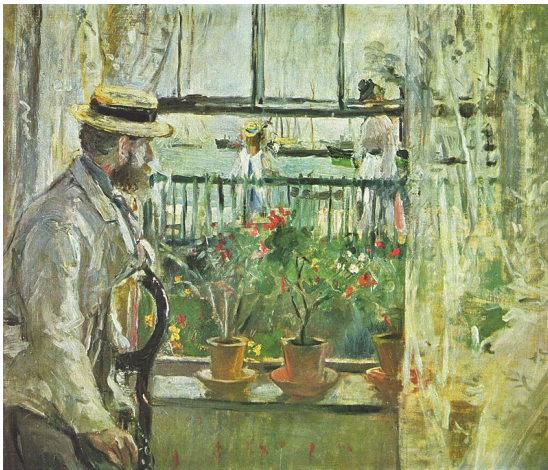
Source: [5]

Contemporaries admired the paintings of Bochner, and reviews of her new works and exhibitions regularly appeared in newspapers and magazines. She was invited to give lectures at many universities in Europe. At that time, such recognition for a female artist was an exception to the rule. However, despite the success and popularity during her lifetime, at the beginning of the twentieth century, R. Bochner's works were already forgotten, and interest in her work is revived again only in recent decades.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the famous French artist among the founders of Impressionism was **Berthe Morisot** (1841-1895). Berthe, much like her sister Edma, has been interested in painting since childhood. It is very likely that genetic ties were involved: their mother, Marie Josephine Cornelia Thomas, was the niece of Jean-Honoré Fragonard, a famous Rococo painter [20]. In the 1850s, the family moved to Paris, where the Morisot sisters studied painting, first with Geoffroy-Alphonse Choquet, and later with Joseph Guichard and

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, one of the founders of the Barbizon school and an advocate of plein-air painting.

Drawing landscapes, Berthe improved her technique, but from the late 1860s she became interested in the portrait genre and ordinary everyday scenes, often set in bourgeois interiors with windows. Some experts considered this type of artwork as a metaphor for the condition of women from the upper class of the nineteenth century, locked in their beautiful homes [20]. In 1875, however, Morisot painted her husband (Fig. 12), in which she reinterpreted the traditional scene: Berthe depicted a man indoors looking out the window at the harbour while a woman and child stroll outside. Thus, the artist erased the boundaries established between female and male spaces, demonstrating modern and advanced views. Unlike her male colleagues, Berthe did not have access to Parisian life with its exciting streets and cosy cafes. Yet, she too painted scenes of contemporary life, depicting something that stood in stark contrast to the content of the academic painting, which focused on ancient or imaginary subjects (Fig. 13).



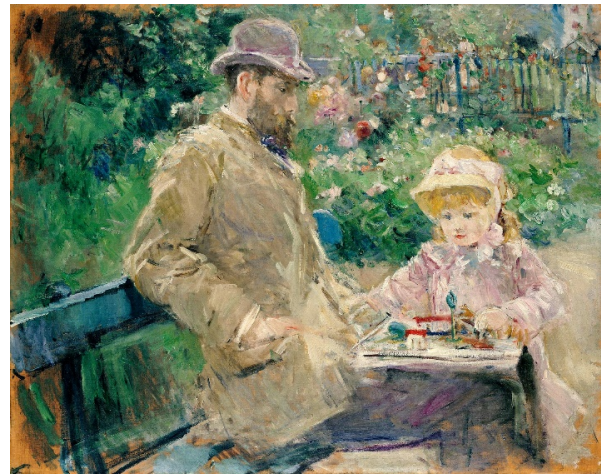
**Figure 12.** Eugène Manet on the Isle of Wight

**Source:** [20]

Since the 1870s, Morisot played a key role in the Impressionist movement. Along with Alfred Cissley, Claude Monet and Auguste Renoir, she was the only woman artist of the time to sell one of her paintings to the French national authorities. Her works were characterised by great visual ease and excellent command of colour techniques [21]. During this period, Bertha developed her own colour palette, using lighter colours than other artists did. White and silver tones with a few darker flecks became her trademark. She found the vision when she, like other Impressionists, travelled through the south of France in the 1880s. The Mediterranean sunny weather and colourful scenery made a lasting impression on her and her painting technique. Berthe Morisot died at the age of fifty-four, and a year later an exhibition dedicated to the artist's memory was organised in the Paris gallery of Paul Durand-Ruel, an influential art dealer and populariser of Impressionism [20]. However, the public forgot about the painter for almost a century. Only at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, after her paintings were shown in 1977 at the exhibition "Artists: 1550-1950", the interest in the work of Morisot sparks up again.

An outstanding female sculptor of the nineteenth century in France was **Camille Claudel** (1864-1943), however, better known as the mistress of Auguste Rodin. Though she played an important role not only in the life of the outstanding artist but also in the sculpture of the Art Nouveau style at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among the various activities, Camilla preferred clay modelling since childhood, trying to sculpt from life and making her family members pose for her. It is worth noting that the parents of the little master were not happy about it and did everything to make Camilla become, as it was customary for women at that time, a "good wife" [22]. Camilla's determination and persistence to study sculpture eventually helped her to enter the private Colarossi Academy in 1881, where she studied under Alfred Boucher. In 1883, Camilla met Rodin, a relationship with whom had a great influence on her development and formation as an artist.

Since 1888, Camilla settled in Rodin's workshop, becoming a muse and assistant to the outstanding master.



**Figure 13.** Eugene Manet and His Daughter in the Garden

The works of Claudel created during this period were continuously criticised and compared with the works of Rodin, which negatively affected the assessment of her creative practice. After five years of an affair with Rodin, their relationship began to gradually collapse, which, oddly enough, had a positive impact on the formation of new ideas and original approaches to their implementation. The sculpture "Bronze Waltz" (1892) became one of the first works where the artist's departure from the influence of her mentor is sensed [22]. The dynamics of the couple's movement, the expressiveness of the plasticity of the figures (especially the hands) together with a smooth combination of different textures, create a bright and lively sculptural ensemble, which seems to be frozen in time. The final breakup of relations with Rodin took place in 1898, after which Claudel created the "The Mature Age", which reflects her own emotions and reactions to these events.

In the last years of the nineteenth century, The Art Nouveau style had a great influence on artists and sculptors. Claudel was no exception, but studying and incorporating elements from Japanese culture allowed her to reach a new level. Prominent examples of this are "The Confidence" (1897) (Fig. 14) and "The Wave" (1900) (Fig. 15), in which the artist used a rare material at that time – onyx, building a composition on the play of rounded and smooth lines. In the early twentieth century, she began to develop paranoia based on a nervous breakdown. Despite her mental state, Claudel had many patrons, and her work was a high commercial success. In this regard, the famous critic Octave Mibro noted: "Rebellion against nature: the woman is a genius!" [22]. However, in 1913 Camilla was placed in a psychiatric hospital with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, where she spent the last thirty years of her life. She stopped creating and destroyed most of her works. Today her works (about 90 sculptures, designs and sketches) are exhibited in the Rodin Museum, and the status of their author is considered to be a student and lover of the outstanding master. The figure and works of Camille Claudel as an outstanding master of sculpture became known only at the end of the twentieth century.



Figure 14. The Confidence



Figure 15. The Wave

Source: [22]

In general, the “female” fine arts of the 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century represented all the major European art schools and styles of this era. Women artists of this period mastered classicism and academicism (Angelica Kaufmann), romanticism and neoclassicism (Constance Mayer), orientalism (Elisabeth Jericho-Bauman), impressionism (Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, Lucy Bacon, Eva Gonzalez, Marie Brackmon), critical and social realism (Virginia Demon-Breton, Maria Bashkirtseva, Elena Wrangel, Zinaida Serebryakova), early modernism (Elena Polenova). Their creative work was not inferior to that of men by any criteria (professionalism, content, creativity, innovation, etc.).

### CONCLUSIONS

The study highlights the role of women in the history of fine arts. The social status of artists for a long time limited their realisation as professionals. The gradual expansion of social opportunities for women (in particular, the opportunity to receive an art education) has had a positive impact on the recognition of the talent and skill of artists and the popularisation of their works in society. It was underlined that a woman's decision on self-realisation and self-identification in art was quite difficult. On the one hand, it was contrary to the patriarchal demands to prefer the work of a housewife and a mother of children, and it also did not provide opportunities for professional

development and talent exploration. On the other hand, working professionally did not release women from the responsibility for housekeeping and raising children. This decision testified to the dedication of the artists to art, proved their determination, motivation and professionalism.

It is determined that the creative path of women artists in the French fine arts, their struggle against social foundations and a sincere desire to depict the world as they perceive it, testifies to the presence of talent, hard work and determination to realise their goals and dreams. A brief overview of the creative heritage of French artists of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries demonstrates the high level of their performance techniques in various styles (neoclassicism, art nouveau, impressionism, animalism, etc.). The artists not only used interesting artistic techniques in their works, but also applied innovative means of expression, searched for new genre formations and unusual artistic images. Highlighting the artworks and a brief review of the oeuvre of French women artists of this period allows for an explanation of the conventionality of gender distinction in relation to women in general and women's art in particular.

Prospects for further development of the proposed topic are seen in the use of the materials of this study in relevant investigation and the possibility of their introduction into the lecture courses of art universities.

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## Жінка-митець у європейському образотворчому мистецтві: гендерний та професійний статус

**Анотація.** Тривалий час в розвитку культури місце жінки в мистецтві як митця та професіонала визначалось суворими соціальними обмеженнями та підлеглою роллю в суспільстві. Історично дискримінаційний характер щодо жіночої художньої творчості був обумовлений несприйняттям жінки, як митця та дійсно професіонала. Однак цим питанням, як і гендерному статусу жінки-художниці, до сьогодні не приділено достатньої уваги мистецтвознавців. Мета статті – розкрити передумови, особливості становлення, розвитку та соціального (гендерного) сприйняття творчості жінки-митця у європейському образотворчому мистецтві другої половини XVIII–XIX століть (на прикладі французьких художниць). У статті використано комплекс методів: історико-культурологічний і міждисциплінарний методи, порівняльний аналіз, узагальнення і систематизація, що спрямовані на висвітлення ролі жінок-художниць в образотворчому мистецтві та визначення техніко-технологічних особливостей, використаних в роботах майстринь. У статті висвітлено шлях становлення мисткинь, як професіоналів у живописі та скульптурі, охоплюючи період з XVI до кінця XIX ст. Огляд жанрових уподобань художниць виявляє, що найчастіше вони зверталися до портрету, мініатюри та декоративним оздобленням. У статті відмічаються етапи зміни соціальних норм та взаємовідносин протягом XVIII-XIX ст., що вплинуло як на рівень мистецтва та культурного обміну, так і на професійну діяльність жінок-художниць. В цей період з'являється все більше великих творів на релігійну та міфологічну тематику, зображення великих батальних сцен та оголеної натури, а огляд спадку французьких художниць зазначеного періоду допомагає усвідомити умовність гендерного розмежування. Наукова новизна статті полягає у з'ясуванні специфіки творчої практики жінок в історії європейського мистецтва, висвітленні шляхів становлення жінки-художниці як професіонала і митця в образотворчому мистецтві XVIII-XIX століть (на прикладі французьких мисткинь) та оцінки їх мистецтва крізь призму гендерної ідентифікації в історичній ретроспективі

**Ключові слова:** жінка-художник, гендерне питання, культура, мистецтво, живопис, скульптура