

KUMU CONFERENCE / 2020

Women Artists in Baltic and Nordic Museums

5–6 March 2020
Auditorium of the Kumu Art Museum

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

 EESTI KUNSTIMUUSEUM

KUMU

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The conference is supported by:



WOMEN ARTISTS IN BALTIC AND NORDIC MUSEUMS

The conference *Women Artists in Baltic and Nordic Museums* accompanies the Kumu Art Museum's exhibition *Creating the Self: Emancipating Woman in Estonian and Finnish Art* (from 6 December 2019 to 26 April 2020, curated by Tiina Abel and Anu Allas) and focuses on women artists in the collections, permanent displays and temporary exhibitions of Baltic and Nordic museums.

Since the 1970s, the art world has been paying increasing attention to the role and visibility of women artists in art history and the contemporary art scene. For various reasons shaped by historical contexts and the dynamics of the art world, the works of women artists have often been overshadowed by those of male artists. Recently, we have seen a rise in the number of projects, exhibitions, conferences, academic publications and catalogues dealing with the oeuvres of women artists; however, the changes in various institutions of the art world have taken place in different ways and at different rates.

The aim of the Kumu conference is to focus on the art museums in the Baltic and Nordic countries and to comparatively analyse the share of works by women artists in their collections, to examine the strategies of supplementing collections and the changing structures of permanent displays, and to discuss exhibitions and research projects organised by these museums.

Conference board: Anu Allas (Kumu Art Museum), Tiina Abel (Estonian Academy of Arts), Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen (Network for Gender and Diversity in Nordic Art Museums), Bart Pushaw (University of Copenhagen) and Kadi Polli (Kumu Art Museum).

The working language at the conference is English.

THURSDAY, 5 MARCH

- 10:15 Opening remarks
Kadi Polli, director of Kumu Art Museum
Anu Allas, curator and programme manager
- 10:30–12:15 **MAPPING AND COLLECTING**
Chair Kadi Polli
- Baiba Vanaga**
Rundāle Palace Museum
Women Artists' Works in Public Collections in Latvia, 1870–1915
- Linda Hidders**
Nationalmuseum Stockholm
In Search of Swedish Women Sculptors: Mapping, Collecting and Exhibiting Women Sculptors at Nationalmuseum Stockholm
- Kai Stahl**
University of Turku
Early Works by the Mei Sisters in the Collections of Estonian Museums
- 12:15–12:45 Coffee break
- 12:45–14:30 **DISCOVERING AND MUSEALISING**
Chair Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen
- Natalie Gutgesell**
Coburg
Discoveries of Lost Female Artists and Their Impacts on the Internal Hierarchies of Museums' Collections: The Baltic-German Painter Alexandra von Berckholtz (1821–1899)
- Inge Lise Mogensen Bech**
Brundlund Castle Art Museum / Aarhus University
The Musealisation of the Danish artist Franciska Clausen (1899–1986)
- Jana Kukaine**
Art Academy of Latvia
An Encounter with Aleksandra Beļcova (1892–1981) in the Virtual Feminist Museum
- 14:30–15:30 Lunch

- 15:30–17:15 **INCREASING VISIBILITY**
Chair Sigrun Åsebø
- Anna Meister and Karin Sidén**
Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm
Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde: Working to Increase the Visibility of Women Artists
- Agnė Narušytė**
Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
Women Artists in the New Permanent Display at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius: An Insider's Account
- Ingrid Ruudi**
Estonian Academy of Arts
A Postscript to an Exhibition: Feminist Investigation of the Museum of Estonian Architecture
- 17:15–18:00 Coffee break
- 18:00–19:00 **GUIDED TOUR AT THE EXHIBITION** "Creating the Self. Emancipating Woman in Estonian and Finnish Art" (in English)

FRIDAY, 6 MARCH

- 10:30–12:15 **RECOGNISING AND EMPOWERING**
Chair Mirjam Hinrikus
- Anne-Maria Pennonen**
Ateneum Art Museum
Finnish Women Artists as Prize-Winners in the Mid-Nineteenth Century
- Anu Utriainen**
Ateneum Art Museum
Women in the Finnish Art Scene at the Turn of the 20th Century: Education, Status and Career Opportunities in the Context of Building a Museum Collection
- Hanne Selkokari**
Ateneum Art Museum
The Finnish Women Artists' Exhibition in Berlin in 1943: Aune Lindström's Tour de Force

12:15–12:45 Coffee break

12:45–14:30 **RETHINKING ART HISTORY**

Chair Linda Kaljundi

Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim
Women Artists and the Shortcomings of Art History as We Know It

Sigrun Åsebø

University of Bergen
Reiterated Stereotypes or Liberated Women? Exhibiting Modernist Women in Norwegian Art Museums

Bart Pushaw

University of Copenhagen
What about Whiteness? Confronting Coloniality

14:30–15:30 Lunch

15:30–17:15 **WAYS OF CURATING**

Chair Ingrid Ruudi

Frida Forsgren

University of Agder
Strategies in Contemporary Norwegian All-Women-Exhibitions

Laima Kreivytė

Vilnius Academy of Art
Why Do We Still Need All-Women-Exhibitions?

Līna Birzaka-Priekule

Latvian National Museum of Arts
Deconstructing Woman's Identity in the 21st Century: The Contemporary Art Programme in the Creative Studio of the Exhibition Hall Arsenāls

17:15–18:00 Coffee break

18:00 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**

Chair Bart Pushaw

Jenna C. Ashton

University of Manchester
Learning from Artists: Migration, Equality & Care

ULLA ANGKJÆR JØRGENSEN

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim

Women Artists and the Shortcomings of Art History as We Know It

New data from the Association of Danish Museums show that female artists are still under-represented in Danish exhibitions and collections. The last count was done in 2004 by the Agency for Culture and Palaces and resulted in the conference *Before Invisibility*, which caused a great deal of debate but, as it now appears, did little to change things. What are the dynamics of Danish art history when, after fifteen years of debate, the picture stays the same? Danish museums and galleries have, in fact, tried to include female artists in their exhibition programmes. There have been quite a few solo exhibitions of women's work in the past decades, although obviously not enough to improve the statistics. These are complicated questions and I will look into them by discussing the habits of art history writing through my current project *Women's Modernism* (in Denmark). In the museum, the problem is often the relation between solo exhibitions and collection. How does an isolated solo exhibition reflect back on the presentation of the collection, or does it? To illustrate this problem, I will focus on the Holstebro Kunstmuseum, which owns an extensive collection of Olivia Holm-Møller's (1875–1970) work and in 2015 showed the solo exhibition *Olivia's World*. However, on a recent visit I was quite shocked to find out that only one painting of hers was represented in the mounting of the permanent collection. The solo exhibition and the research done in connection with it had obviously not helped the museum in reconsidering their presentation of art histories. Another problem is the dynamics between academic art history and museum practice, and what narratives the canon is constructed around. To shed light on this question, I will use as a case study the work of Rita Kernn-Larsen (1904–1998), who was part of the international surrealist movement and the local Danish surrealist group in the 1930s and 1940s. She lived abroad most of her life, but exhibited regularly in her home country, and in 1995 she had a solo exhibition at the Randers Kunstmuseum. Still, she was never included in the history of the Danish surrealist movement. Then finally, in 2018, she was rehabilitated by the big retrospective *SOLO: Rita Kernn-Larsen* shown at the Gl. Holtegaard and Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Aalborg. My article for the catalogue reads her as a New Woman and in my presentation I will discuss the shortcomings of art history as we know it, with Rita Kernn-Larsen and Olivia Holm-Møller as examples.

CV

Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen is Associate Professor of Art History at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. Her research focuses on questions of gender and diversity, post-colonialism and globalisation, technology and the arts, essentially in Nordic twentieth-century art and contemporary art and visual culture. Feminist perspectives on art history form a natural part of her work and, more recently, she has included museums. She has been a research partner in interdisciplinary research projects on gender and aesthetics, Nordic art and globalisation and, currently, with Sigrun Åsebø, she leads the Gender and Diversity in Nordic Art Museums network. Her publications include the mono-

graph *Kropslig kunst* (2007), and chapters in *Globalizing Art* (2011), *Kjønnsforhandlinger* (2013) and *Sámi Art and Aesthetics. Contemporary Perspectives* (2017). Her latest publications include chapters in *Digital Dynamics in Nordic Contemporary Art* (2019), *Exploring the Black Venus Figure in Aesthetic Practices* (2019) and *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries, 1925–1950* (2019). In 2015, she was a co-curator of the exhibition *WOMEN FORWARD!* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in art history and supervises MA and doctoral students.

JENNA C. ASHTON

University of Manchester

Learning from Artists: Migration, Equality & Care

Learning from Artists offers an auto-ethnography of feminist curatorial practice across a timescale of three years, exploring collaboration with diverse, international women artists working and living in Manchester, UK.

I position women artists as important witnesses on living with and through the complexities of oppression and trauma, migration and gender. The knowledge and experiences of artists in the UK – especially those with migratory heritage – is rarely sought by policy makers, researchers, and scientists trying to find solutions to society's biggest challenges, such as inequalities, ageing and climate change. Yet, artists offer some of the most insightful and important methods for exploring the world, articulating what they find, and imagining new futures. In this talk I explore how these artists use such experiences to reclaim spaces (public and cultural), enacting processes of feminist care and action, towards social change.

Initial curatorial collaboration led to the development of a new studio and gallery space, the Centre for International Women Artists (CIWA). Inspired by other examples of feminist spatial and museums practice, this intervention aims to empower the participating women artists to explore solutions to some of the many challenges discussed in this conference, with learning that is transferable to various international contexts.

I evolve a conversation with theorists on race, gender, equality and care, such as Stuart Hall, Sara Ahmed, bell hooks, Elke Krasny, Robin DiAngelo, Maya Angelou, to help me make sense of practice, and relationships, that carried so much weight, uncertainty and expectation for all those involved.

CV

Jenna C. Ashton is a Lecturer and Programme Director of Heritage Studies in the Institute for Cultural Practices, The University of Manchester, and a practising artist and curator. Jenna's research, practice and teaching concern the development of collaborative and creative feminist methods and analysis for applied heritage and theory, and working at the intersection of heritage, arts, activism and social justice. Jenna holds a number of advisory

and trustee roles in the UK and internationally. Jenna is the founder and Creative Director of the arts and heritage organisation Digital Women's Archive North (DWAN), and in 2019, in collaboration with various women artists, she co-founded CIWA, the Centre for International Women Artists, a collective artist studio and gallery in Manchester, UK. She is the editor of the two-volume international publication *Feminism and Museums: Intervention, Disruption and Change* (MuseumsEtc, 2017), with the second edition due in 2020. Her next book, *Creative Pedagogy for Messy Heritage*, is in development with Routledge.

LĪNA BIRZAKA-PRIEKULE

Latvian National Museum of Arts

Deconstructing Woman's Identity in the 21st Century: The Contemporary Art Programme in the Creative Studio of the Exhibition Hall Arsenāls

The Latvian National Museum of Art consists of five departments: the Latvian National Museum of Art, Art Museum Riga Bourse, Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Museum of Romans Suta and Aleksandra Beļcova and the exhibition hall Arsenāls. For the last three years, Līna Birzaka-Priekule has been Head of the Creative Studio in the Latvian National Museum of Arts, which is the LNMA Exhibition Hall's Arsenāls top floor exhibition space. The exhibition programme is the only one in the five museum structures especially dedicated to contemporary art, focusing mainly on emerging artists and 21st century topics.

Latvian contemporary artists do not tend to reflect on current realities, which are dealt with in a variety of theoretical discourses. The art theorist and historian Ieva Astahovska argues that this is a socially neutral position that we can see not only in the art of today, but also in the art of the past. There is a preference for diving into subjective worlds, though this is not the case with feminist art. Within the last four or five years, both feminist theory and feminist art in the Latvian contemporary art scene has continued to evolve. Thanks to the feminist theorist and curator Jana Kukaine, the artist and activist Mētra Saberova and the painter and art critique Rasa Jansone, a very active circle has formed focusing on themes that question assumptions about womanhood. Within the exhibition programme of the Creative Studio, Līna Birzaka-Priekule has initiated four exhibition projects (group and solo shows) that have deconstructed female identity and female stereotypes. Along with the exhibitions, we have been developing education programmes for different target groups.

The aim of the presentation is to talk about our experience curating and organising the artist Ieva Kraule-Kūna's exhibition *Hot Babas*, which focused on the witch archetype and its manifestation in 21st century rhetoric regarding powerful women, the group exhibition *Melos*, which deconstructed women's role in melodramatic cinema, the group show *Euro Femmes* (curator Mētra Saberova), which included a broad spectrum of feminist topics that Latvian society finds hard to cope with, still battling through the notions of traditional, i.e.

discriminatory, perceptions of gender and sexuality, and Liena Bondare's exhibition *Season 2–Episodes*, which focused on reflections on femininity, coming of age, belonging and change.

CV

Līna Birzaka-Priekule is a curator and art historian. She has studied Italian language and culture in the Latvian Academy of Culture and has recently graduated from the Latvian Academy of Art with a master's degree in the History of Art. She is currently studying for a PhD in the Latvian Academy of Art, researching the transformation of the concept of self-image in contemporary art. Since 2016, she has worked as a curator and the head of the Creative Studio in the Latvian National Museum of Art exhibition hall Arsenāls. Līna Birzaka-Priekule has worked with numerous emerging artists' exhibitions, including those of Atis Jākobsons, Amanda Ziemele, Elīna Vītola, GolfClayderman and others. Currently she is working on the Viennese Actionist Hermann Nitsch exhibition in the Latvian Museum of Decorative Arts and Design. Since 2019 she has been a lecturer in the Latvian Academy of Arts. She regularly publishes in leading Latvian culture and art media. She is one of the creators of the radio podcast on visual art for Latvian Radio 3. Since 2019 she has been the head of the Purvītis Prize Expert Panel.

FRIDA FORSGREN

University of Agder

Strategies in Contemporary Norwegian All-Women Exhibitions

Ever since the second feminist wave in the 1970s, there has been a pronounced focus on the inclusion of women artists in the male-centred art historical canon. Exhibitions, collections, conferences and academic publications have been paying increasing attention to the role and the visibility of women artists. This work has been carried out in different ways and at different rates, and its methods have changed since the pioneer work of the political all-women exhibitions of the 1970s. The first phase of feminism was dominated by a need to "fill in the gaps", and all-women exhibitions were organised to show how women artists had been omitted from the canon. As Griselda Pollock has argued, this method is problematic since it may tend to fix women artists in a perpetual position as "the other": "The difficulty remains, however, that, in speaking of and as women, feminism confirms the patriarchal notion that woman is the sex, the sign of gender, perpetually the particular and sexualised other to the universal sign Man, who appears to transcend his sex to represent Humanity." That all-women exhibitions are problematic is a theme that frequently recurs in discussions and exhibition critiques on this subject.

How then should we include women artists in the canon? Is it necessary to organise all-women-exhibitions and how should this be done?

This paper examines different curatorial methods of canon inclusion within the genre "all-women exhibitions". I consider two Norwegian contemporary exhibitions and discuss their feminist strategies: Eva Bull Holte & Marthe Elise Stramrud at the RAM galleri in 2019 and Siri Aurdal by Elise Mugaas at the Kunstnernes Hus in 2016. I compare these two exhibitions to the feminist strategies employed in the both-gender exhibition The Great Monster Dada show at the Høvikodden Kunstsenter in 2019.

CV

Frida Forsgren is Associate Professor in Art History at the Faculty of Art at the University of Agder, Norway. She has a PhD in Renaissance Studies from the University of Oslo, and has written several books on American Modernism. She is currently working on a project on Norwegian Modernism called *Modernism After Munch 1930–1980*.

NATALIE GUTGESELL

Coburg

Discoveries of Lost Female Artists and Their Impacts on the Internal Hierarchies of Museums' Collections: The Baltic-German painter Alexandra von Berckholtz (1821–1899)

Alexandra von Berckholtz was one of the most renowned female painters of the 19th century. In the 1860s alone, she created over 200 portraits of aristocrats and society personalities in Munich. She was a part of an established network that included a large number of members of European royal houses, noble women and men, actors, singers, pioneers of science and artists. She showed her commitment to the social issues of her time and supported numerous charitable organisations. Her work and life, however, were lost from art historical memory. Only fourteen of her paintings found their way into museums; two of them are among the collection of the Art Museum of Estonia in Tallinn. Through an international research project, it has been possible so far to rediscover 163 of her works worldwide.

Works by female artists were mostly part of the storage collections at a multitude of museums worldwide and were not presented in permanent exhibitions. Due to research projects, exemplary lost works by women artists have not only been rediscovered, they have also become catalysts for a special focus on female issues in the arts at the museums in question.

Triggered by research projects, museums first started presenting their stored works of female painters in special exhibitions. Public attention and reception were the factors that influenced a second step, which consisted in the transfer from the temporary show to a museum's permanent exhibition.

CV

Natalie Gutgesell is currently working on a postdoctoral thesis on the interdisciplinary performative arts of the parks of Weimar and their intermediality during the eighteenth century. She has studied English and French linguistics at Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg and Art History, Media and Theatre Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen/Nuremberg. Other fields of her research are nineteenth and twentieth century art, in particular forgotten female painters connected to Eastern Europe. Among her publications are *Dora Hitz – Fränkische Künstlerin, rumänische Hofmalerin, europäische Avantgardistin* (2019), *Alexandra von Berckholtz – Malerin und Mäzenin im 19. Jahrhundert* (2017), *Joseph Victor von Scheffel als bildender Künstler* (2014) and a number of articles on nineteenth and twentieth century art. She has lectured at Philipps-University Marburg and in universities in Munich and Basel.

LINDA HINNERS

Nationalmuseum Stockholm

In Search of Swedish Women Sculptors: Mapping, Collecting and Exhibiting Women Sculptors at Nationalmuseum Stockholm

The Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden reopened in 2018 after five years of renovation. There has been a deliberate effort in the new display of the museum to incorporate more works by women artists. This means that out of approx. 5000 displayed objects at least 15% are works by women artists (compared to 1% in the 1990's).

However, in the collections there are still gaps; for instance, few works of women sculptors have been included in museums' collections throughout history, in spite of the fact that women sculptors were very numerous at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. As a response to this weakness, the Nationalmuseum is currently directing a research project aiming to shed light on women sculptors who were active in the late 19th and early 20th century, artists unknown to most people today, but both praised and criticised during their lifetimes.

In recent decades a growing number of international studies on women sculptors have occurred. The purpose of the research project is to gather Nordic studies and researchers and put them in an international, Nordic and national context, to look more specifically at questions concerning women sculptors' *education* (social background, art schools and teachers?), *professionalisation* (production? art market and exhibition arenas? strategies to exhibit, sell, and live on their art?), *institutionalisation* (what was bought by museums and what was not? public commissions?), *reception and historiography* (reception by the public and critics? why were they forgotten in the 20th century?).

The project is a collaboration between the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, the Nasjonalmu-seet Oslo and the Ateneum Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki. The results will be presented in an exhibition (Stockholm 2021) and a publication in English.

CV

Linda Hinnners is a senior curator at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, specialising in sculpture. She has curated various exhibitions, among others an exhibition on Auguste Rodin and the Nordic countries in 2015 (in collaboration with the Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki). Her doctoral thesis dealt with French decorative artists (including women) who worked at the Royal Palace in Stockholm ca 1700. Hinnners is currently directing a research project concerning Nordic women sculptors which will result in an exhibition and a publication in 2021.

LAIMA KREIVYTĖ

Vilnius Academy of Art

Why Do We Still Need All-Women Exhibitions?

My proposal for the conference is a curatorial talk about the all-women exhibitions I've curated: their ideas and motivations, curatorial and artistic strategies, critical responses and political outcomes. I would like to present three projects: *Postidea* (four exhibitions, 2012–2016), *M/A\G/M\A: Body and Words in Italian and Lithuanian Women's Art from 1965 to the Present* (at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius and the Central Institute for Graphics in Rome, 2017–2018) and *Women on the Moon* (at the Klaipeda Culture Centre, 2019). They explored different temporal modalities – present, past and future – and used different tools to dismantle master narratives.

Postidea was a grass-roots collective initiative to bring women together and to claim the space, voice and political presence of women. It was horizontally structured and collectively executed and aimed at leaving the margins and taking the stage: claiming the collective and individual presence of women artists. *M/A\G/M\A* was a collaborative project for making connections and creating links between Lithuanian and Italian women artists: from the feminist art in Italy in the 1970s to emancipatory art practices in Lithuania in the 1990s. *Women on the Moon* was a feminist-futurist attempt. In 2019 we celebrated 50 years since Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon's surface and said: "That's one small step for (a) man, one giant leap for mankind". Within this time, women have gotten closer to the moon but still haven't put their "heels" on its surface. *Women on the moon* was an artistic investigation of what it means to be between different stages of equality and raised the question of whether putting "her" footprint on the dusty surface of the moon would be a step towards or away from planetary thinking in a post-human era.

CV

Laima Kreivytė is a curator and writer based in Vilnius. She teaches at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and is working on her PhD thesis *Curating as Art Practice and Politics*. Kreivytė co-cu-

rated the *Baltic Mythologies* exhibition at the 3rd Prague Biennial (2007) and was a curator of the Lithuanian pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). Recently she co-curated the new permanent display of the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius (2019).

JANA KUKAINE

Art Academy of Latvia

An Encounter with Aleksandra Beļcova (1892–1981) in the Virtual Feminist Museum

The term “virtual feminist museum” was coined by Griselda Pollock in order to enhance a strategy for thinking and writing about the visual arts which is not constrained by the rigid and often formalist rules of art history, and to challenge the dominant museum model that has tended to exclude the artistic contributions of women. Pollock has used this term to characterise the unexpected encounters between “images by and about women” and to conceptualise the complex network of variable social relations, including gender, embodiment, affect, trauma, history, representation and modernity. In my presentation for the conference, I would like to use the methodological approach defined by Pollock to analyse the exhibition *Aleksandra Beļcova (1892–1981). Painting. Graphics. Porcelain of Baltars Workshop*, which was on view at the Latvian National Museum of Art from October 2019 to January 2020 and is considered to be “the largest retrospective of the artist’s work, offering an all-encompassing look at her diverse creative heritage” (a citation from the exhibition’s annotation.) The curator of the show was Natalya Yevseyeva (Наталья Евсева), an art historian and the head of the Romans Suta and Aleksandra Beļcova Museum in Riga. My intention is to offer some remarks about the ambiguous effects of Aleksandra Beļcova’s inscription in the canon of modernity. Undoubtedly, the exhibition has succeeded in presenting her as an artist in contrast to the more widely-known image of Aleksandra as the partner of Romans Suta (exemplified, for instance, by the director Ināra Slucka’s theatre production with the telling title *The Master and Aleksandra* in 2019). On the one hand, the exhibition has provided insight into the artist’s life by giving Aleksandra her own voice (thanks to the inclusion of fragments from her letters and diaries). The romantic notion of her being “the master’s muse” is successfully discarded, while the themes of sisterhood, women’s friendship and mother-daughter relationships are highlighted. On the other hand, the figure of the artist is presented in anti-historical, anti-political and formalist terms in accordance with the tradition of art history, which constructs an artist as a creative genius developing her intrinsic style, while ideological and social processes are regarded as a curious or burdensome background. Finally, despite her impressive artistic oeuvre, Aleksandra Beļcova is still portrayed as a woman functioning within the spheres of domesticity, motherhood and childcare, and her femininity is also emphasised by the scenographic elements of the exhibition, featuring flowers, hats and ribbons, despite the fact that these “attributes of a lady” cannot be found in her self-portraits.

By identifying the challenges of mounting an exhibition about a female artist, I would like to trigger a discussion about the variable relations between gender, artistic practice and history. My main question is: how can encounters with female artists be liberated from the homogenising restrictions of femininity in order to highlight the complexity of their historical, political and social positions both as artists and women?

CV

Jana Kukaine is an art critic and feminist curator from Riga, Latvia. Since 2019, she has taught feminist theory and aesthetics at the Art Academy of Latvia. She is the author of the monograph *Lovely Mothers. Women, Body, Subjectivity* (Riga: Neputns, 2016), which is a feminist study of motherhood in contemporary art. Currently, she is also a doctoral student at the Art Academy of Latvia.

ANNA MEISTER AND KARIN SIDÉN

Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm

Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde: Working to Increase the Visibility of Women Artists

For the past decade, Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde has put special emphasis on increasing the number of women artists when organising shows with works from the Museum Collections, as well as in temporary exhibitions. The Waldemarsudde Collections, formed between the 1880s and 1940s, only contain four percent of works by female artists. The museum has no obligation to add to its collections and, as there have been no new funds for acquisitions, the number of works has only increased through donations. However, beginning in 2020, a fund established by the Friends of Waldemarsudde Association with the purpose of acquiring works by women artists will help increase the numbers in the future. Up to now, Waldemarsudde has concentrated on temporary exhibitions as a means of bringing women artists and their works into focus. We have chosen not to do all-women presentations, but rather to include women artists on equal terms in exhibitions, such as *Skagen. A Scandinavian Artist Colony* (2013), *Inspiration Matisse!* (2014), in which we showed works by early Scandinavian Modernists, *The Magic of Light* (2016), featuring plein air painting from the late 19th century, and *Form and Colour. André Lhote and Swedish Cubism* (2017). In our presentation we will discuss the reasons why we have not chosen to do all-women shows when dealing with late 19th century and early Modernist art. We will also address some of the difficulties encountered when preparing the exhibitions, such as locating works by women artists once we had “discovered” their existence, and why we chose to display works by male and female artists side by side, as well as other issues. The above-mentioned exhibitions have all been accompanied by catalogues, which have presented new research that has contributed to enriching and altering Swedish art history and the art history canon, something that has been noted and commented on both by the

international research community and in the Swedish media. These exhibitions also contributed to Waldemarsudde being elected “Swedish Museum of the Year” in 2017. Each year, Waldemarsudde also presents solo shows featuring contemporary artists and, since 2012, with gender parity. Our paper presents the reasoning behind this, and also highlights strategies for the future and how Waldemarsudde will continue to feature women artists of the past and present, to ensure that they are given their just place in art history. A tangible example of this is the research-based exhibition *A Room of One’s Own – the Studio and the Artist in the Late 19th Century*, which is scheduled to be shown in the winter of 2021–2022 and is based on the ongoing PhD project of the Waldemarsudde curator Carina Rech.

CV

Anna Meister is an archivist and librarian who has been working at the art museum Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde in Stockholm since 1997. She is in charge of Waldemarsudde’s archives, including Prince Eugen’s comprehensive correspondence, as well as the museum’s extensive photographic collections. She regularly gives talks and lectures concerning Prince Eugen, the history of Waldemarsudde and its exhibitions. Anna Meister has co-curated many of the research-based exhibitions at Waldemarsudde in recent years and has contributed to and edited the accompanying catalogues. Notable exhibitions include “The Magic of Light” (2016), presenting numerous forgotten women landscape painters from the late nineteenth century, and “Form and Colour. André Lhote and Swedish Cubism” (2017), which focused on the Swedish students of the French cubist André Lhote, who taught approx. 200 Swedish artists, many of them women.

Karin Sidén is Associate Professor of Art History at Uppsala University and has been Director General of the Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde since 2012. She is a working member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and was formerly Director of Research at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. There she was responsible for many research-based exhibitions on historic and contemporary Swedish and European art. Under her directorship, the number of female artists exhibited by the museum has greatly increased. Monographic exhibitions of the works of 19th century and Early Modernist painters, such as Eva Bonnier, Helene Schjerfbeck, Sigrid Hjertén and Paula Modersohn-Becker, have been shown alternately with the works of such current painters as Karin Broos and Cecilia Edefalk, and the works of representatives of decorative and applied arts, such as Annika Ekdahl, Anja Notini and Suzy Strindberg. In group exhibitions, as well as, for instance, ones featuring the works of artist colonies in Skagen, Denmark and Grez-sur-Loing, France, the number of represented female artists has markedly increased. The Waldemarsudde Collections, which were assembled between the 1880s and 1940s, have only a small number of works by female artists (as is the case with all major Swedish art collections from that period), something that Sidén is changing via actively encouraging donations from the general public and by ear-marking funds from the Friends of Waldemarsudde Association.

INGE LISE MOGENSEN BECH

Brundlund Castle Art Museum / Aarhus University

The Musealisation of the Danish artist Franciska Clausen (1899–1986)

Since 2012 the Danish art museum Brundlund Castle in Aabenraa has housed a collection of 2500 artworks (drawings, sketches, paintings, collages etc.) made by the Danish avant garde artist Franciska Clausen. As one of the few Danish artists of her generation, she had an extensive international network, living in Berlin and Paris in the 1920s. When she returned to Denmark in 1931, she apparently found little to no recognition of her art. The Copenhagen art world did not respond positively to her work, and she returned to her home-town of Aabenraa, in southern Denmark, surviving as an artist by painting realist portraits.

Lately there has been an increased interest in Clausen’s art: the posthumous landmark solo exhibition *Absolut Avant garde* in 2012 displayed many of the artist’s major works and she has actually been the focus of several exhibitions, biographies and catalogues since the 1960s, when the Swedish art historian Oscar Reutersvärd wrote about her. Still, Clausen’s own conceptualisation of Denmark as “the Land of giving cold shoulders” (de kolde skuldres land) haunts the reception of her oeuvre. But to what extent is it fair to say that she was a “lost” woman artist, and how do such verbal markers as “lost”, “forgotten” or “excluded” shape the position and space we currently reserve for women artists in museums and art history?

In discussing the above questions, this presentation focuses on the exhibition- and museum-historiography of Clausen’s oeuvre and the possible futures for new presentations and exhibitions. My point of departure will be my research project on Franciska Clausen (institutionally connected to both the Brundlund art museum and Aarhus University), which investigates the collection of Clausen’s works and her personal letter archive.

CV

Inge Lise Mogensen Bech is an art historian. She specialises in Danish art from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has worked at the Esbjerg Kunstmuseum and at the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen. In 2019 she earned a PhD for her dissertation *Women, Madness and Popular Culture. Danish Modernism around the First World War*, which was completed in cooperation with the Aarhus Universitet and ARoS Museum of Modern Art. She is currently doing research on the Danish artist Franciska Clausen (1899–1986) as postdoc work (2019–2022) at the Aarhus Universitet and the Art Museum Brundlund Castle.

AGNĖ NARUŠYTĖ

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

Women Artists in the New Permanent Display at the National Gallery of Art in Vilnius: An Insider's Account

In 2019, the National Gallery of Art (Vilnius, Lithuania) opened a new permanent display of art from 1940 to the present. Two recent shows of women's art, *M/A\G/M\A* and *Personal*, have highlighted how difficult it has been for women to get recognition in the Lithuanian art scene. Their near absence in the first permanent display (opened in 2009) was glaring. What is more, during the ten years of the gallery's existence, only six women artists have had solo shows, while men have had 35. Thus, among the main goals of the curatorial team was to give more prominence to women artists in the permanent display. The four curators – Lolita Jablonskienė, Laima Kreivytė, Jolanta Marcišauskytė-Jurašienė and Agnė Narušytė – searched the museum's collection and discovered a huge gender disproportion: during the Soviet period, works by women artists were bought very rarely, and only after 1990 did the situation somewhat improve. Therefore, some works had to be borrowed from other museums, artists and their relatives.

As a result, the new display does feature more women artists than before, but the disproportion still prevails, especially in the sections presenting art from the 1980s until today. Nevertheless, the inclusion of previously forgotten women artists and the emphasis on women's achievements have helped to destroy the myth that only male artists were great experimenters in the 1960s and 1970s. Additionally, it became possible to show historical processes from women's perspective.

Since this paper will be presented by one of the curators of the display, it will focus on the process of its preparation and assess its gender imbalance self-critically, trying to point out prejudices, the narrative of art history and material conditions that have "conspired" to preserve as much of the *status quo* as possible against the curators' conscious intentions.

CV

Agnė Narušytė is a critic, curator and researcher interested in contemporary photography and its links with philosophy, history and art. She defended her PhD thesis at the Vilnius Academy of Arts in 2005. In 1997–2009, Narušytė curated the collection of modern photography at the Lithuanian Art Museum, taught at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and Edinburgh Napier University (United Kingdom), edited the foreign culture page of the cultural weekly *7 meno dienos* and created broadcasts on culture for Lithuanian National Television. In 2009–2014 she was the head of the Department of History and Theory of Art at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and now is an associate professor. In 2008 she published the monograph *The Aesthetics of Boredom in Lithuanian Photography*, based on her PhD thesis, in 2011 *Lithuanian Photography: 1990–2010*, in 2016 *Camera Obscura: The History of Lithuanian Photography 1839–1945* (together with Margarita Matulytė) and in 2017 *Post Ars, The Score*, a study of Lithuanian avant-garde art in 1989–1996.

ANNE-MARIA PENNONEN

Finnish National Gallery – Ateneum Art Museum

Finnish Women Artists as Prize-Winners in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

This paper discusses the relationship between the Finnish Art Society, women artists and the purchase of their artworks for collections. The Finnish Art Society, founded in 1846, started to collect art in 1849, but the art society's collection was displayed for the first time only in 1863. The society also founded a drawing school in 1848, which allowed women to study there from the very beginning. The training, however, did not include drawing or painting nudes. In 1857, the board of the society decided to award prizes for young artists. The main idea of these awards was to encourage young talent, and the competition was open to all artists, including women.

Although the society was run by men, the active role that women artists had in Finnish art life in the 1850s shows in the number of awards given to women. During the first five years eleven prizes out of twelve were given to women. The situation changed in the 1860s, and in the years 1879–1900 men were awarded 37 times, but women only 28. The list of awarded women artists included Alexandra Frosterus-Sältin, Victoria Åberg, Ida Silfverberg, Emma Gylden-von Schantz, Selma Schaeffer, Victorine Nordenswan and Zélé Agricola. Later Hilda Granstedt and Fanny Churberg were awarded.

Generally the situation of women artists is regarded as being poorer than that of their male colleagues. These figures, however, raise the question of why so many women were awarded at the beginning.

Most of the artists that were awarded first prizes had remarkable careers. Several women artists also travelled to study in Germany and France, and their artworks were purchased for the collections of the art society. What was the role of their artworks in the society's collections at the time?

CV

Anne-Maria Pennonen currently works as a curator at the Ateneum Art Museum. She has curated and co-curated several exhibitions, most recently *Silent Beauty. Nordic and East Asian Interaction*. Pennonen has also worked as a lecturer in art history and classical archaeology at the University of Helsinki. Her doctoral thesis *In Search of Scientific and Artistic Landscape* (2020 University of Helsinki) discusses the relationship between Düsseldorf landscape painting and the natural sciences in the 19th century, as seen in the artworks of Finnish, Norwegian and German artists. She has also studied Greek and Roman antiquity, specialising in Roman pottery. Before working at the university and the museum, Pennonen worked as a translator, interpreter and teacher in the private sector.

BART PUSHAW

University of Copenhagen

What about Whiteness? Confronting Coloniality

In 2017, the American Scandinavian Foundation invited me to give a lecture in conjunction with their new exhibition *Independent Visions: Helene Schjerfbeck and Her Contemporaries*. Organised by the Ateneum Art Museum in celebration of Finland's centennial year of independence, the exhibition played a key political role in advancing Finland's soft power by espousing gender egalitarianism as a national product. I decided to frame my lecture under the title "Nordic Women Painting Race and Place," a critical take spurred by the absence of discussion during the multiple centennials that occurred in 2017. The year not only marked the centennial of Finland's independence, but the first Sámi political assembly (in Trondheim/Tråante), as well as the infamous transfer of the Caribbean islands of St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas from Denmark to the United States. The year 2017, it seemed, was a key time to engage long ignored histories of Nordic colonialism. In the Baltic states, however, there is no similar regional discourse of gender egalitarianism as a brand to disseminate internationally. Moreover, colonial histories are only now becoming popularised as tools to understand internal, local histories, and are still ignored in regard to engagement with the wider world. In many cases, the historical artists in most dire need of recuperation are paradoxically of the colonial elite (such as Baltic Germans). This paper emphasises the urgency of thinking through ideas of colonialism and critical race theory in (re-)evaluating the cultural production of women artists. I aim to reveal how notions of gender and race work in tandem to provide important antidotes to—or, at the very least, critically question—national narratives that so often limit the political work of national galleries.

CV

Bart Pushaw is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the international research project *The Art of Nordic Colonialism* at the University of Copenhagen. He received his PhD from the University of Maryland, where his research focused on the global scales of race, colonialism and materiality in the visual culture of nineteenth-century Estonia and Latvia. A frequent collaborator with the Kumu Art Museum, he spearheaded the international conference *Symbolism and the Baltic Sea Region, 1880–1930* in 2019, and was the head curator of the exhibition *Conductors of Color: Music and Modernity in Estonian Art* in 2016–2017. His recent publications address white women's artistic negotiations of race and exoticism in the interwar Baltic, slave portraiture in Denmark, early Sámi photography and global networks of Inuit printmakers. He is especially interested in the methods of global art history, and their translation between the art history classroom and the museum setting.

INGRID RUUDI

Estonian Academy of Arts

A Postscript to an Exhibition: Feminist Investigation of the Museum of Estonian Architecture

Compared to the fields of art history and contemporary art, feminist research has been very late entering the discourse of Estonian architecture, with remarkable reluctance to address any feminist concerns characterising the institutions or most of the practitioners themselves. Established in 1991, the Museum of Estonian Architecture is one of the key institutions in the field in terms of building up the historical canon by collecting architects' archives, organising exhibitions and being the main publisher of monographs, as well as influencing the contemporary discourse via exhibitions, open lectures and other events. Thus far, the museum's choices in terms of collecting and displaying architecture have reinforced a traditional and very masculine take on the discipline: the archives are comprised mostly of male architects' heritage, and over the years, two out of 42 exhibitions have been dedicated to women practitioners, not to mention the principle of organising monographic exhibitions that reinforce the masculine "hero myth". In spring 2019, I had the opportunity to curate the exhibition *A Room of One's Own: Feminist Questions to Architecture* at the museum. Based on ten questions, the aim of the exhibition was to avoid being a mere display of under-represented women architects and to use feminist curating for self-reflection on the discipline itself, as well as a tool to rethink the issues of knowledge production in architecture and to initiate public discussion of questions of space and feminism. For the proposed paper, I would like to revisit the experience of curating the exhibition and reflect, based on interviews with the museum director and staff, on the later feedback and possible paths of action for the future.

CV

Ingrid Ruudi is an architecture historian and curator based in Tallinn. She is a junior researcher and a PhD student at the Estonian Academy of Arts, Institute of Art History and Visual Culture. Her research interests range from the second half of the 20th century to current times, including intersections of architecture and art in the transition era, architecture as an agent in the public sphere, and gender studies in architecture. She has recently delivered papers at the annual conferences of the College Art Association (New York, 2019), Kumu Art Museum (Tallinn, 2018), European Architecture History Network (Turin, 2014; Tallinn, 2018), European Association for Urban History (Helsinki, 2016), the research conference *Cultures in Transition* (Frankfurt, 2016), and elsewhere. She curated the Estonian exhibition *Gas Pipe* at the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale (2008), the Tallinn Urban Installations Festival *LIFT11* (2011), the exhibitions *Unbuilt: Visions for a New Society 1986–1994* (2015) and *A Room of One's Own. Feminist's Questions to Architecture* (2019) at the Museum of Estonian Architecture, and the personal exhibition of Dénes Farkas at the Contemporary Art Museum Estonia (2017). She has written architecture and art criticism for Estonian and international media.

HANNE SELKOKARI

Finnish National Gallery – Ateneum Art Museum

The Finnish Women Artists' Exhibition in Berlin in 1943: Aune Lindström's Tour de Force

In May 1943, Aune Lindström, an art historian, art critic and curator at the Ateneum Art Museum, travelled with members of the Women's Civil Defence Organization's Lotta Svärd to Berlin. Lindström was sent to Berlin by the Finnish Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to organise and to open an exhibition of Finnish women artists and crafts people, *Ausstellung Finnischer Künstlerinnen und Kunsthandwerkerinnen*.

The touring exhibition included 136 artworks from private collections and directly from the artists' studios: paintings, graphic art, sculptures, medals, textile art and ceramics. Ateneum's art collection had already been evacuated in the autumn of 1939, leaving the museum building in Helsinki empty. This made it impossible to loan out works to other exhibitions. When Finnish art had been in earlier years represented abroad, the emphasis had been strongly on museum collections, including women's art.

In Berlin in 1943, there were artists who did not want to participate in the exhibition. Their reason for dropping out was often political; these artists included young Tove Jansson and elderly Helene Schjerfbeck. However, at that time, Lindström held an important position in the art field, and she also wielded power as an art critic. Under these circumstances, it was probably not easy for the artists to refuse to participate.

In opening the exhibition, Lindström noted that women's art in Finland was not separate from that of men because of equality in the country and, accordingly, the exhibited works could represent all art from Finland. Was this exhibition about nationalistic art or was it propagandistic? The paintings, graphic art and sculptures presented women, children, flowers, landscapes, cityscapes, still lifes and interiors: no heroic or historical motifs, nor was the war present in these images.

In my paper, I will discuss this exhibition and raise other questions that relate to the war time conditions in the art field in Finland, how women artists dealt with war and how their works were presented in Finnish museum collections before the 1940s. I will also talk about an early woman art historian who played an important role by curating a Finnish art exhibition abroad under very unconventional circumstances.

CV

Hanne Selkokari is the collections curator at the Ateneum Art Museum (since 2018). Her doctoral thesis *Treasures of a Patriot. Eliel Aspelin-Haapakylä as an Art Collector and Art Historian* (published in Finnish in 2008) is a study which combines biographical perspective, art history as a discipline and art historical scholarship in the 19th century. Selkokari has dealt with Aune Lindström's career as an art historian (2013, 2019), art collections and their presentation (2010), artists' travels (2011), and Graeco-Roman antiquities in Finnish collections in her previous research articles (the latest in 2018), as well as Japanese influences on Finnish art

(2016). She has worked as a coordinator for the Finnish Doctoral Programme in Art History at the University of Helsinki (2010–2013), as chief curator in the WSOY Literary Foundation (2013–2016) and as the museum director in Ainola (2016–2018).

KAI STAHL

University of Turku

Early Works by the Mei Sisters in the Collections of Estonian Museums

The three sisters, Kristine (1895–1969), Lydia (1896–1965) and Natalie Mei (1900–1975) were all artists, presumably the first female siblings in Estonian art. Lydia Mei's masterpiece *Woman with Cigarette* from the 1920s is currently the lead image of the Kumu Art Museum's exhibition *Creating the Self: Emancipating Woman in Estonian and Finnish Art*.

Nowadays, there are over three thousand pieces of art by Natalie Mei in the collections of Estonian museums. Most of them are theatre costume drawings and belong to the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum. As for Lydia Mei, there are hundreds of her works in the collections of Estonian museums, mainly in the Art Museum of Estonia, as well as many works in the Tartu Art Museum. From the eldest sister, only a few art works belong to museums. Nevertheless, up till now, the sisters' oeuvres have been largely unknown outside of Estonia, and for decades slightly ignored even in their own country, like those of their contemporary female colleagues in general.

In this paper, I focus on what kind of works of art the Visual Art Endowment under the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, and the Ministry of Education bought from the Mei sisters for the collection of the Art Museum of Estonia before WWII. These institutions acquired during the years 1925–1940 a total of almost 900 art pieces. The first work was bought from Natalie in 1928 and from Kristine and Lydia in 1925. With the thirteen pieces acquired from Natalie Mei during this period, she became a quite well-represented modern female artist in the state collections. Of these purchases, only one work remains in the museum's collection.

CV

Kai Stahl graduated from the University of Turku in 2005 as an art historian. She is a PhD student in the School of History, Culture and Arts Studies at the University of Turku. Her PhD thesis examines the Estonian artist Natalie Mei's oeuvre from the perspective of female agency and modernisation from the 1910s to the 1930s. Stahl has published many articles related to women artists and their education and modernism in visual art since 2007. Since 2000 she has also taught at the MA level and given lectures on modernism, women artists, Estonian art and semiotics. Stahl's latest publication is *Juudit Anton Starkopfi ja August Roosilehe loomingus: ning tema ikonograafilisest põimumisest Salome ja Medusa kujudega*

(*Judith in the Oeuvre of Anton Starkopf and August Roosileht: and the Iconographic Interweaves with the Figures of Salome and Medusa*), in *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi. Studies of Art and Architecture*, 2019. Her latest research, *Ainulaadne sösarkond: õed Kristine, Lydia ja Natalie Mei (A Unique Sisterhood: The Sisters Kristine, Lydia and Natalie Mei)*, will be published by the Art Museum of Estonia in spring 2020.

ANU UTRIAINEN

Finnish National Gallery – Ateneum Art Museum

Women in the Finnish Art Scene at the Turn of the 20th Century: Education, Status and Career Opportunities in the Context of Building a Museum Collection

Women played an important role in the construction of the field of art in Finland in the latter half of the 19th century and later in the portrayal of a modern civic society. They were also bold and innovative, experimenting with styles and forms, as well as techniques. In comparison to other European countries, women in Finland had exceptional opportunities to work as professional artists and their works have been acquired by public art collections since the museum system was established in the mid-19th century.

In order to understand the specific aspects of working as a woman artist, I will also concentrate on identity, language and social structures in the Finnish art scene in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Social movements and unrest at the time gradually led to the formation of a new civic society that afforded women freedom of movement and enabled them to pursue independent professional careers. These developments were significant background factors in the establishment of museum collections in the 19th century. This progress, however, took new turns in the 1920s, as the new national independence created a need for a specifically nationalistic Finnish art, which was generally created by men artists.

In my talk, I will give an overview of women's opportunities to get an education, have careers and work as professional artists between the 1880s and 1940s in Finland. I will give some examples of how this development is today evident – or not evident – in the Finnish National Gallery collection in terms of the number of works by women, as well as in the museum's current exhibition policies in Finland and abroad, the *Modern Woman* project and touring exhibition being one of them. Many pioneering women, operating in the Finnish art scene, were role models in their aspirations for many artists, regardless of gender. Among them, also represented in the *Creating the Self* exhibition is Helene Schjerfbeck, not only as a woman artist but also as a teacher in the Finnish Art Society's Drawing School, and Sigrid Schauman as an art critic.

CV

Anu Utriainen is Senior Researcher and the Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery. She has been a member of the curatorial committees for many Ateneum exhibitions and has taken part in major collection projects, such as *Stories of Finnish Art* (2016–2020). Utriainen was responsible for the Tuulikki Pietilä solo exhibition at the Ateneum and domestic touring collection exhibitions of Finnish art, as well as the *Images of the Modern Woman* book and exhibition in New York and Stockholm during the Finnish centenary in 2017 and at the Museum of Western Art in Tokyo 2019. The next venue of the *Modern Woman* tour will be the Gl. Strand in Copenhagen, opening in June 2020. Her most recent exhibition project was *Artists in Ruovesi*, including works by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Hugo Simberg, Ellen Thesleff and Elga Sesemann, shown at the Ateneum in 2019–2020. She was also involved in the *Creating the Self* exhibition at Kumu Art Museum as a curatorial advisor. Anu Utriainen has previously served as Curator of Collections at the Ateneum and has edited many of the museum's collection and exhibition publications. Utriainen specialises in Finnish art of the 1920s and 1930s, including sculpture.

BAIBA VANAGA

Rundāle Palace Museum

Women Artists' Works in Public Collections in Latvia, 1870–1915

In 1912, the director of the Riga City Museum of Art, Wilhelm Neumann, wrote in an annual report about the museum's work in the newspaper *Kunst-Beilage des Rigaer Tageblatts* that in 1911 93 graphic pages, including three colour woodcuts by Alice Dmitrijew (1876–1945), were bought for the graphics cabinet. In the coming years, the museum bought a few more woodcuts by Dmitrijew, as well as several watercolours by Selma Plawneek (1883–1956), thus supplementing the museum's collection with the work of local women artists. It is rather difficult to evaluate the achievements of the women artists during the 19th century and early 20th century, as public collections have only preserved a limited amount of works, although it is known from exhibition catalogues and reviews that, at that time, quite a large number of women were involved in the local art scene. For example, the collection of Latvian painting from the 18th century until the first half of the 20th century at the most significant local collection of art, the Latvian National Museum of Art, includes only about 4% paintings by women artists of the total number of works in the collection. Furthermore, most of the works are from the 1920s–1930s, while only a few are from before World War I. A similar situation is found in the collection of Latvian graphic art, which holds less than 400 drawings, watercolours and artworks by women made in various print-making techniques. Almost all of these artworks, created before 1915, come from three historical sources: the collections of the Riga Art Society, the Riga City Museum of Art and the Courland Province Museum.

Baiba Vanaga: "In this paper, I will look at the history of Latvian museums and collections until about 1915, focussing on how works of women artists came to local public collections, with a special focus on the collections of the Riga Art Society, the Riga City Museum of Art and its predecessor, the City Art Gallery."

CV

Baiba Vanaga studied art history and theory at the Art Academy of Latvia and museology at the Latvian Academy of Culture. In 2015, she defended her doctoral thesis at the Art Academy of Latvia, and the theme of her research work was *Women Artists in Latvia from the mid-19th Century until 1915*. Baiba Vanaga works at the Rundāle Palace Museum as the head of the Art Research Department. She has worked at the Latvian National Museum of Art and at the National Archives of Latvia. Since 2004, she has been the curator of several exhibitions at the Latvian National Museum of Art and its branch museums, has participated in conferences in Riga, Cork, Zagreb, Bremen, Greifswald, Berlin and Vilnius, and has written several articles for Latvian, Estonian, English and German publications. Her research interests are women artists, historical collections and artistic life in Latvia from the late 18th century until the middle of the 20th century.

SIGRUN ÅSEBØ

University of Bergen

Reiterated Stereotypes or Liberated Women? Exhibiting Modernist Women in Norwegian Art Museums

Despite a strong history of equality and heightened awareness of gender equality in the Nordic countries, women's works are less often exhibited, written about and bought by art museums. In this paper, however, I want to direct attention not to "forgotten" women, but to the strategies of inclusion and rewriting of history as practised by art museums. My main area of focus will be late modernism. The Norwegian art critics and art establishment were reluctant to accept abstract or non-figurative art both before and after World War II. Amongst the artists working with abstraction were a number of women pioneers. Aase Texmon Rygh was the first to introduce abstract sculpture to a Norwegian audience. Inger Sitter, Gunnvor Advocaat, Gudrun Kongelf and Anna-Eva Bergmann were all amongst the first abstract painters in 1950s Norway. How were women received by the critics of their time? How do museums deal with issues of gender in relation to artistic practices where gender doesn't manifest itself in the art object? To what extent and in what ways have gendered ideas of abstraction and the artist been reproduced in the art museum? Taking the position of a striving feminist subject (Pollock 1999), this paper will discuss the discourses of abstraction at the intersection of gender and national identity in 1950s Norway, and problematise the gender "blindness" of Norwegian art history. Traces of women's

place in culture and art history exist in the form of isolated works of art by individual artists, but women rarely figured as active participants in the art scene.

CV

Sigrun Åsebø is an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Bergen, Norway. Her publications include articles on feminist theory and historiography, the status and work of women artists in the past and today, and questions of gender, sexuality and identity in contemporary art. Together with Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen (NTNU), Åsebø is the co-founder of the *Nordic Network for Gender and Diversity in Art Museums*, bringing together researchers and museum curators from the Nordic and Baltic area (<https://www.ntnu.no/kunstmangfold>). Her current research focuses on gender and diversity in the museological context, working to explain gender and diversity as they are embedded, played out and negotiated within art museums and curating. Recent publications include articles on readings of the landscape artist Kitty Kielland and her involvement in the women's movement (with Janeke M. Utne), embodiment, gender and the Sami culture in Aslaug Juliussen's art, and readings of feminist curatorial practices in Norwegian art museums.

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