

# OKCMOA

Oklahoma City Museum of Art

## **Nevertheless, She Persisted: Great Women Artists in History**

presented by Curator Bryn Schockmel

*dates: November 2, November 9, and November 16; 5:30 pm at OKCMOA*

In 1971, feminist art historian Linda Nochlin posed the, now famous, question “Why have there been no great women artists?” In this class, we will discover that there have, in fact, been hundreds of great women artists, but that they have been systematically excluded from the art historical canon. This series of three classes focuses on women artists in Europe during the Early Modern period, from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. During this time, many talented women were working in a variety of artistic fields, but they have largely been left out of art historical texts and museums. This lecture series provides an overview of some of the greatest women artists working during this period, focusing on common threads and dispelling misconceptions about women artists. Each of the three classes will conclude with time spent looking in-person at artworks by modern and contemporary women artists in the collection of the Oklahoma City Museum of Art that complement the themes explored in that day’s session.

### **Part One – The Sixteenth Century**

There are few women artists whose names are known prior to the Renaissance, partially as the majority of artists (regardless of sex) during the Medieval period were anonymous, seen more as craftsmen. This changes during the Renaissance, as the notion of the artist as an individual, an exalted genius, begins to take hold. This class explores how some of these early women artists managed to break through barriers and establish themselves professionally, and why this occurred predominantly in Italy.

### **Part Two – The Seventeenth Century**

Compared to previous eras, a significantly greater number of women artists are known to have been active during the seventeenth century; geographically, they continued to be concentrated in Italy, as we saw in the first session, and now increasingly in the Netherlands. Many women artists specialized in a new genre of art: the still life painting. In this class, we examine why such a high concentration of women artists worked in the genre of still life.

### **Part Three – The Eighteenth Century**

In the eighteenth century, the geographical focus moved to France, where some women artists even managed to gain admission to the prestigious Royal Academy. More and more women supported themselves and their families as artists, taking on pupils, running workshops. They branched out into different art forms, such as silverwork and textile production. And yet many continued to be dismissed due to their sex, with their works later misattributed to their more famous male contemporaries. This class will explore the many glass ceilings broken by women artists during this period, despite the limitations put on their work.