

# HISTORIC CINCINNATI WOMEN ARTISTS

Notable  
Memorable  
Significant

**MARY RAN**



## **About Mary Ran Gallery**

- Established – 1976
- Specializes in fine art
  - 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> century paintings
- Services
  - Restoration, appraisals, consultation, framing and sales

## **About Mary Ran**

- Mid 1970's – Established as fine art dealer & antiques purveyor
- Very active in Cincinnati-area art scene with many accomplishments to her credit
- Currently, president of Duveneck Association; member of Woman's Art Club of Cincinnati
- Advocate for women in the arts

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Gallery*

## The Evolving Art Scene in Cincinnati

**1854** - Sarah Worthington King Peter founded Lady's Academy of Fine Arts to educate women in the arts and house collection of fine art copies

**1869** – McMicken School of Drawing and Design opened – first real school of art

**1870** – Great Industrial Exposition of Ohio Mechanics Institute held exhibiting 600 works of art



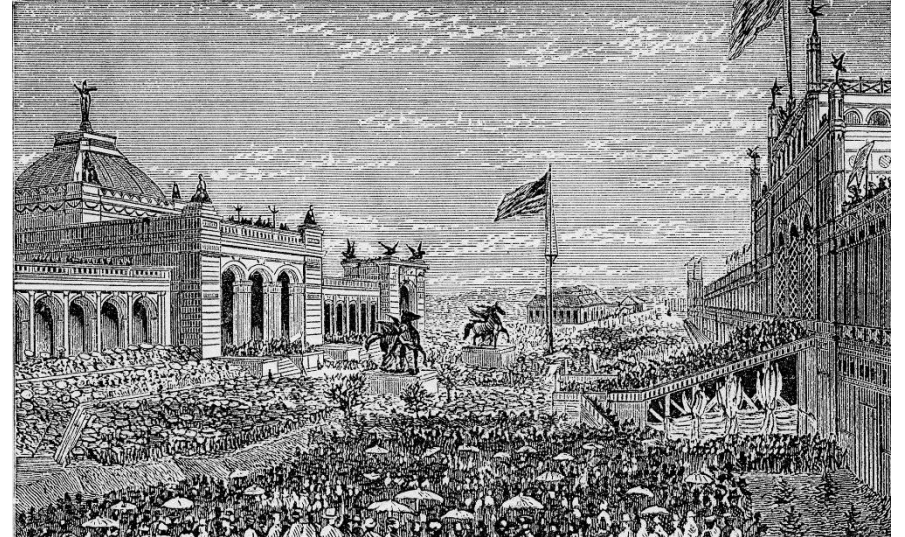
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## The Evolving Art Scene in Cincinnati

**1876** – Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia including Cincinnati art carved furniture and painted China created by women

- 15 Cincinnati women attended
- In **1877** these women started Women's Art Museum Association to promote public art
  - Also started Music Hall

**1880** – Maria Longworth Nichols Storer opens Rookwood Pottery



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## The Evolving Art Scene in Cincinnati

**1881** – Cincinnati Art Museum founded

**1884** – McMicken School of Design becomes Art Academy of Cincinnati

**1885** – first life drawing sessions for women added to Art Academy curriculum

**1886** – the Art Academy moves by the Cincinnati Art Museum



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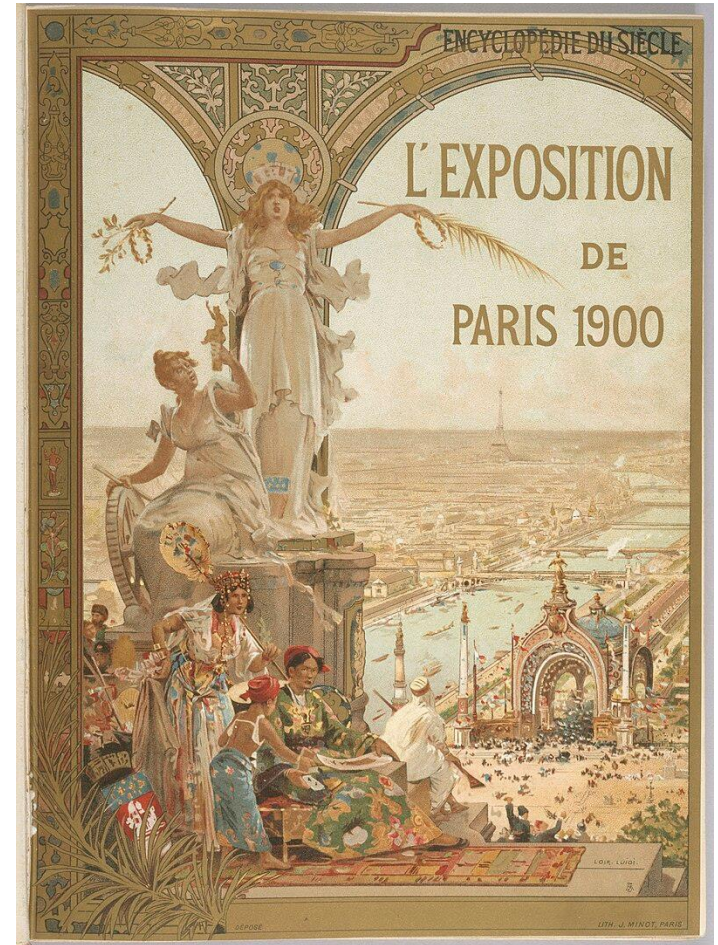
## The Evolving Art Scene in Cincinnati

**1890** – Cincinnati Art Club (men only)

**1892** – Woman's Art Club of Cincinnati

**1900** – Rookwood Pottery receives grand prize for ceramics in Paris Exhibition

**1927** – Charles & Anna Taft bequeath home and art collection to people of Cincinnati



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# NOTABLE WOMEN ARTISTS

GREATER CINCINNATI & COLUMBUS



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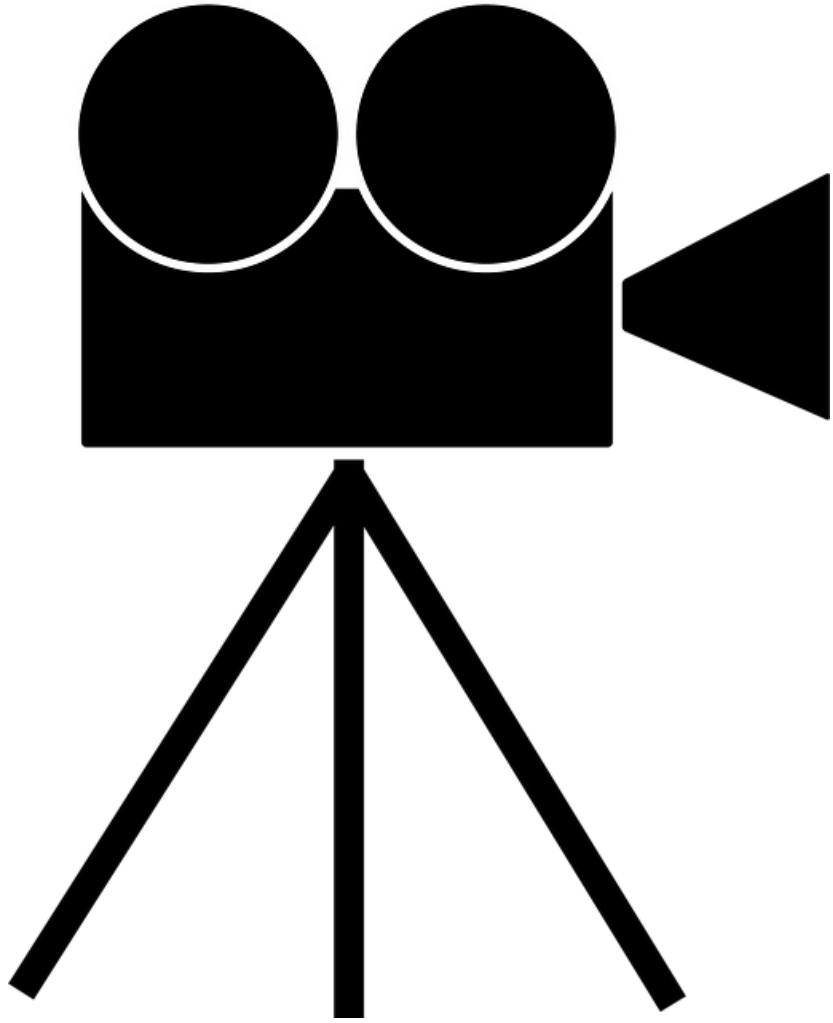
## Lilly Martin Spencer

- 1822 (England) – 1902 (NYC)
- 1841-1848 – studied in Cincinnati
- One of the most popular and widely reproduced American female genre painters of the mid-nineteenth century
- Played with “traditional notions” of women’s role in society
- Her work has been considered “*both* ideological (encouraging accommodation to norms associated with the rising middle class) and utopian (resistant to class or gender domination)



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***Focused on domesticated scenes, women, children***



## Lilly Martin Spencer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wI0-P1npMak>

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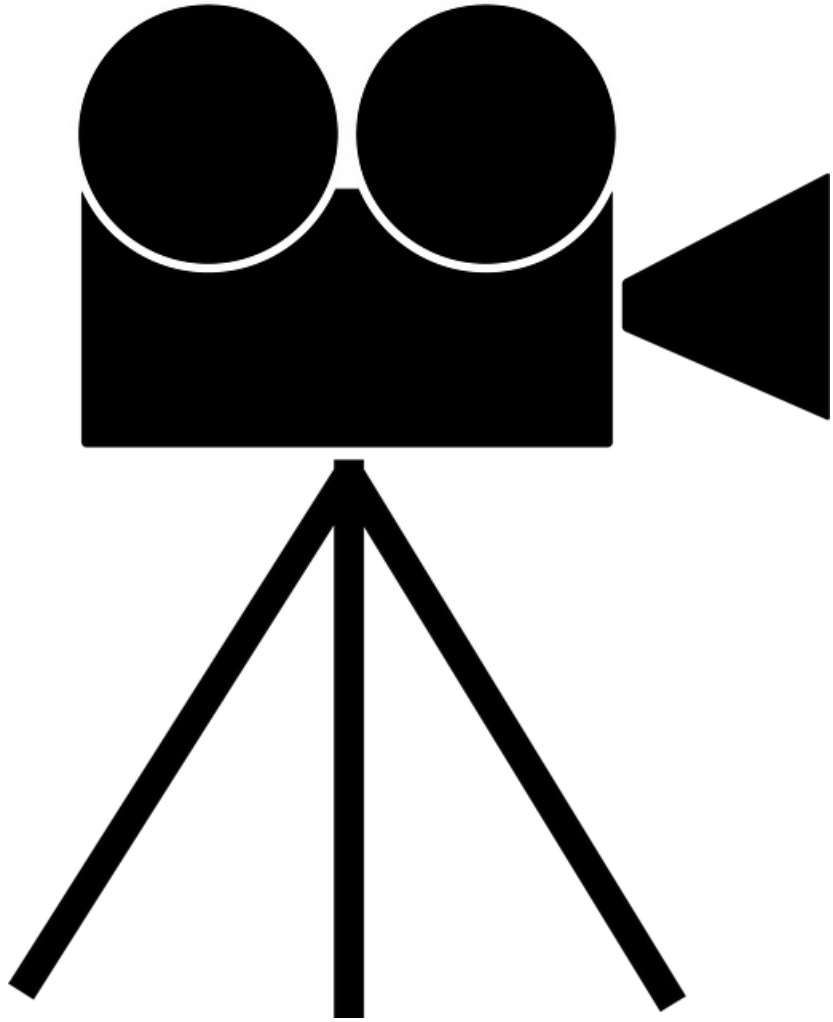


## Maria Longworth Storer

- 1849 (Cincinnati) – 1932 (Paris)
- Patron of fine art
- 1871 – Helped launch Cincinnati's famous May Festival
- Studied at McMicken School of Drawing & Design
- 1880 – founded Rookwood Pottery
- 1900 – won gold medal for paintings on bronze mediums

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***Pushed social boundaries and had a lasting impact on Cincinnati***



## Maria Longworth Storer

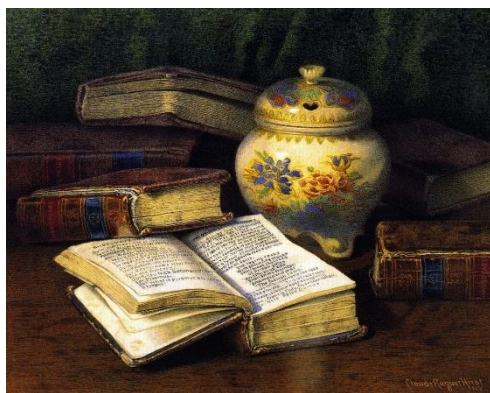
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kAft6MwjWk>

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## Claude Raguet Hirst

- 1855 (Cincinnati) – 1942 (NYC)
- Studied at University of Cincinnati School of Drawing & Painting
- Born Claudine, adopted masculine version of name in early 1870's
- 1890 – began portraying male-pastimes themes in work
- Known for including legible books & illustrations in her work to represent her beliefs as a woman and artist



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***Only woman of her era to gain acclaim using trompe-l'oeil technique***

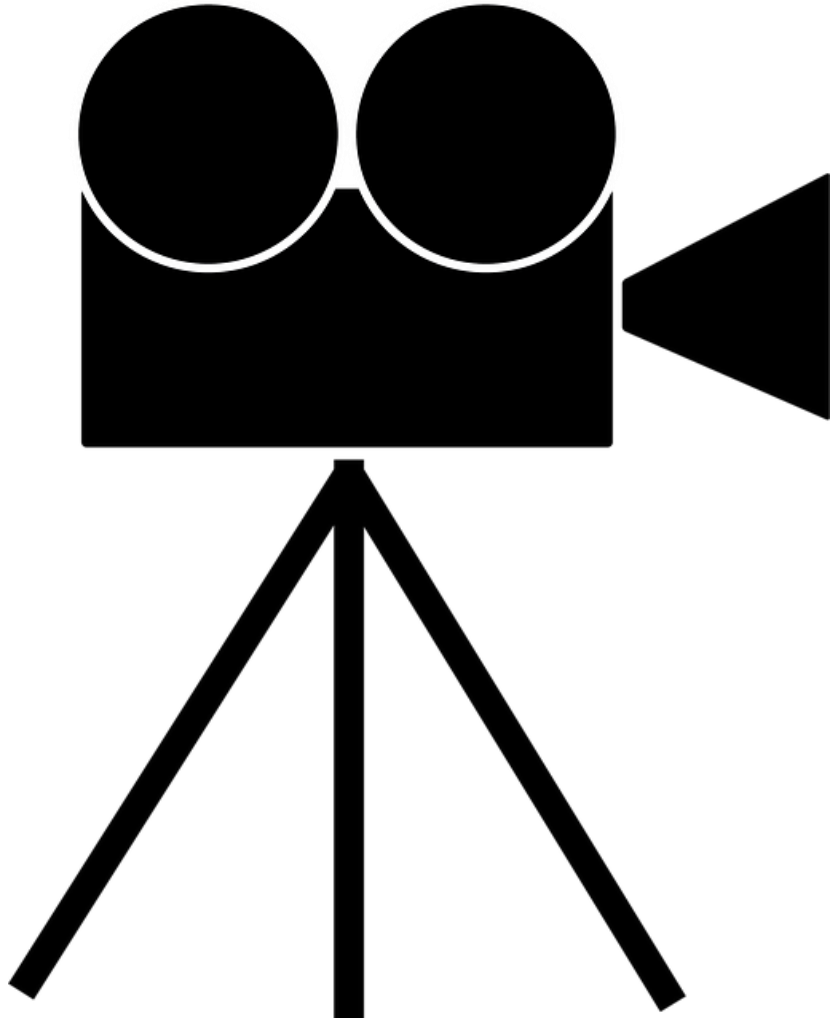


## Elizabeth Nourse

- 1859 (Cincinnati) – 1938 (Paris)
- Attended McMicken School of Design (Art Academy of Cincinnati)
- 1882 – Moved to NYC
- 1883 – Returned to Cincinnati; made living as interior decorator and portrait painter
- One of first American women elected member of Societe Nationale des Beaux-Arts
- Realist movement
- Highly trained woman artist, never married

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***Unquestionably, the premier woman artiste of America.” ~Clement Barnhorn, Sculptor***



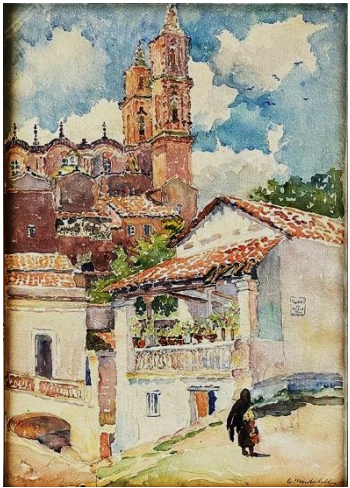
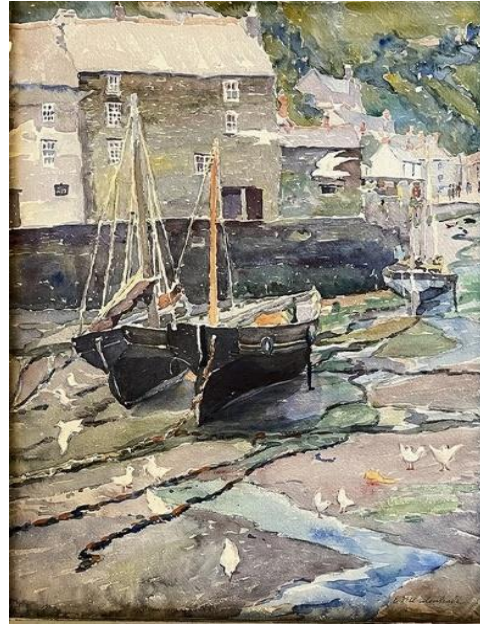
## Elizabeth Nourse

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBw3Koby8Do>

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# Emma Mendenhall

- 1873-1964 (Cincinnati)
- Lifelong resident of Cincinnati
- Taught at Oakhurst School
- Studied with Frank Duveneck
- Known for impressionistic watercolors – portraits, landscapes, travel scenes, flowers, and still lifes
- 1921-1964 – member, American Watercolor Society
- Member, Woman's Art Club of Cincinnati



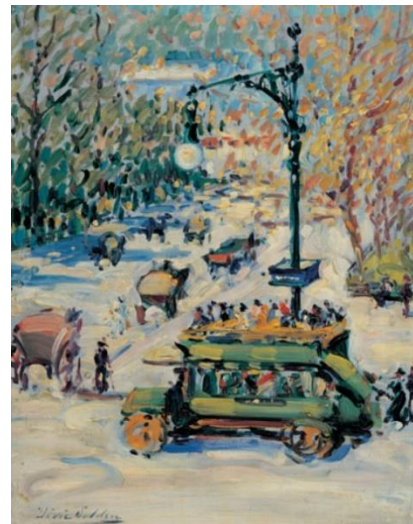
*Typically painted in watercolor in an Impressionistic style*

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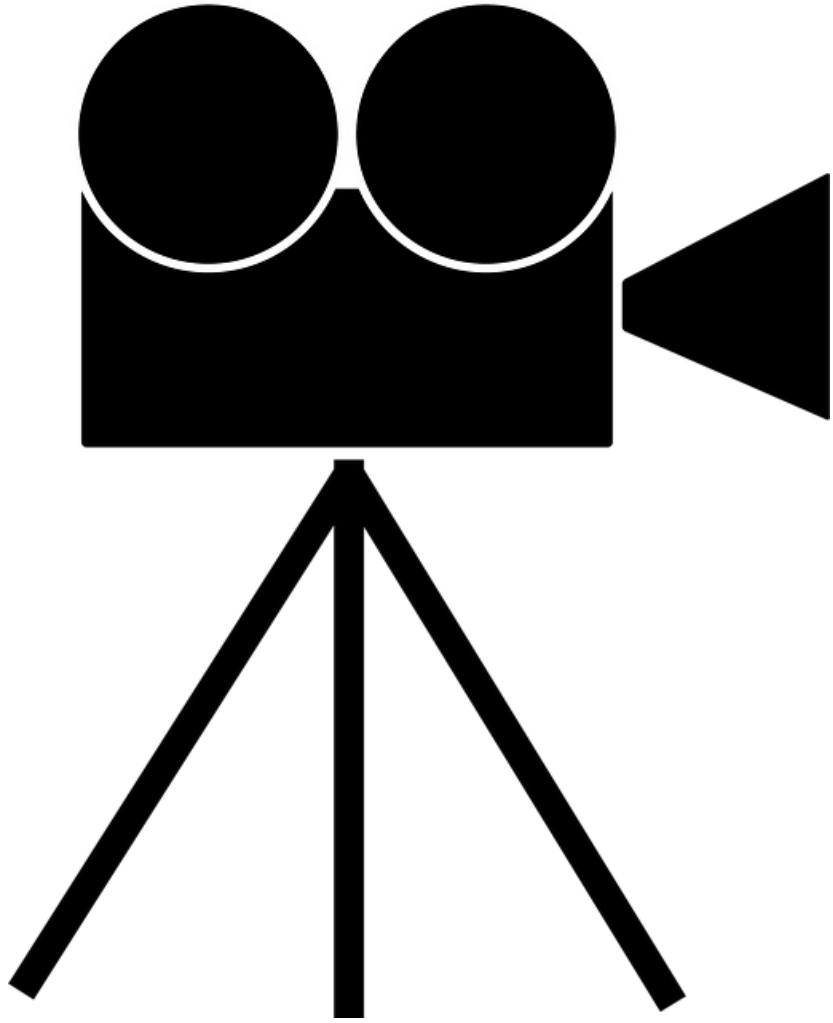
## Dixie Selden

- 1889 - 1973 (Cincinnati)
- Studied with Frank Duveneck
- Known for portraits of Americans; genre paintings, landscapes, seascapes
- Helped found (and twice president of) Woman's Art Club of Cincinnati
- 1884-1912 – Attended McMicken School of Design (Art Academy of Cincinnati)
- Pioneer in advancement of women artists
- Often financed by wealthy Cincinnati elite



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***Excelled as a portrait painter***



## Dixie Selden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCdBWmLEiDQ>

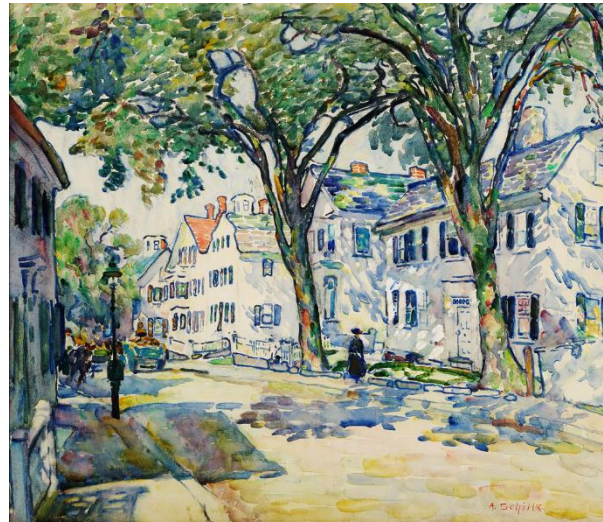
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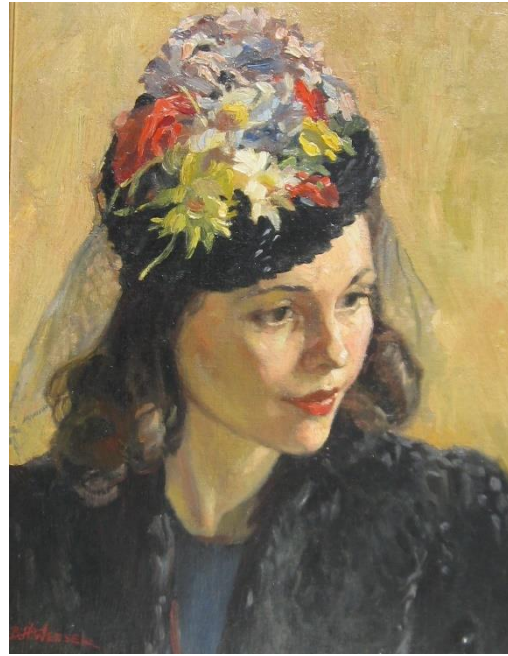
## Alice Schille

- 1889-1955 (Columbus, OH)
- Post Impressionism; known for versatility in painting styles
- Born to wealth; widely traveled
- Attended Columbus Art School
- Studied at Art Students League of New York on scholarship
- Won gold medal at 1915 Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual watercolor exhibition
- Exhibited some first examples of *Pointillism* by an American Artist at Pennsylvania Academy



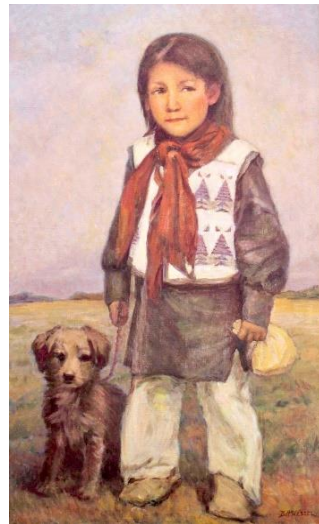
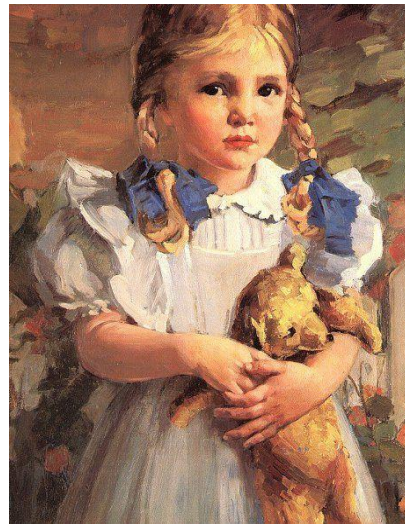
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**Pointillism is a painting style that uses small dots of color to create images**



## Bessie Hoover Wessel

- 1889 (Indiana) - 1973 (Cincinnati)
- Studied with Frank Duveneck
- 1915 – Art Academy faculty
- 1917-19 – President, Women’s Art Club of Cincinnati
- 1917 – Married Herman Wessel – together leading figures in Cincinnati art world
- After Duveneck’s death, couple acknowledged experts on authenticating Duveneck works
- 1969 – Lost husband, Herman
- 1969-73 – “Portraits from the Plains” Indian portraiture project



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**Particularly acclaimed for portraits of children**

# Women Artists - Restricted But Not Deterred

## *Rising Above Stigmas and Challenges*

The art world has **HISTorically** been dominated by patriarchal institutions that systematically excluded and marginalized women artists. These institutions, such as academies, guilds, and professional networks, played a crucial role in shaping artistic careers, providing training, and securing commissions primarily for men.

**HOWEVER...**

***... Many women artists were successful despite gender stigma and art industry acceptance challenges.***

# HIS **TORY**



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**Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?**

Less than **5%** of the **artists** in the Modern Art sections are women, but **85%** of the **nudes** are female.

**GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

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# NOTABLE WOMEN ARTISTS

THROUGHOUT HISTORY



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## Notable Women Artists Throughout History

**Mary Stevenson Cassatt**

**Born:** 1844 (Pennsylvania)

**Died:** 1926 (France)

**American Painter & Printmaker**

**Movement:** Impressionism

**Notable Work(s):** The Child's Bath  
(shown left)

**TECHNICAL SKILL**

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**Notable style and insightful evocations**



## Notable Women Artists Throughout History

**Bessie Potter Vonnoh**

**Born:** 1887 (St. Louis, MO)

**Died:** 1955 (New York City)

**American Sculptor**

**Movement:** Impressionism

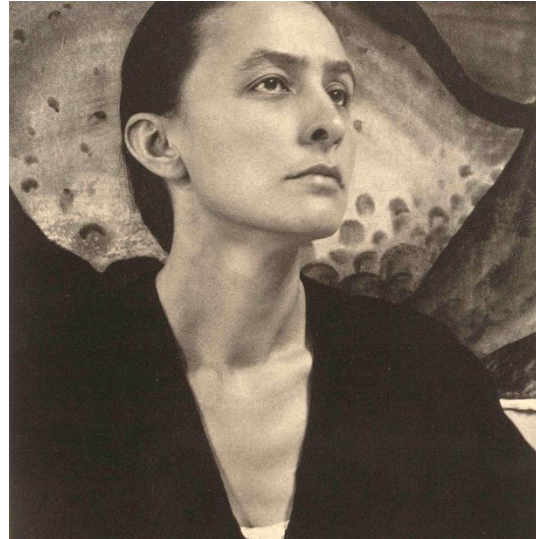
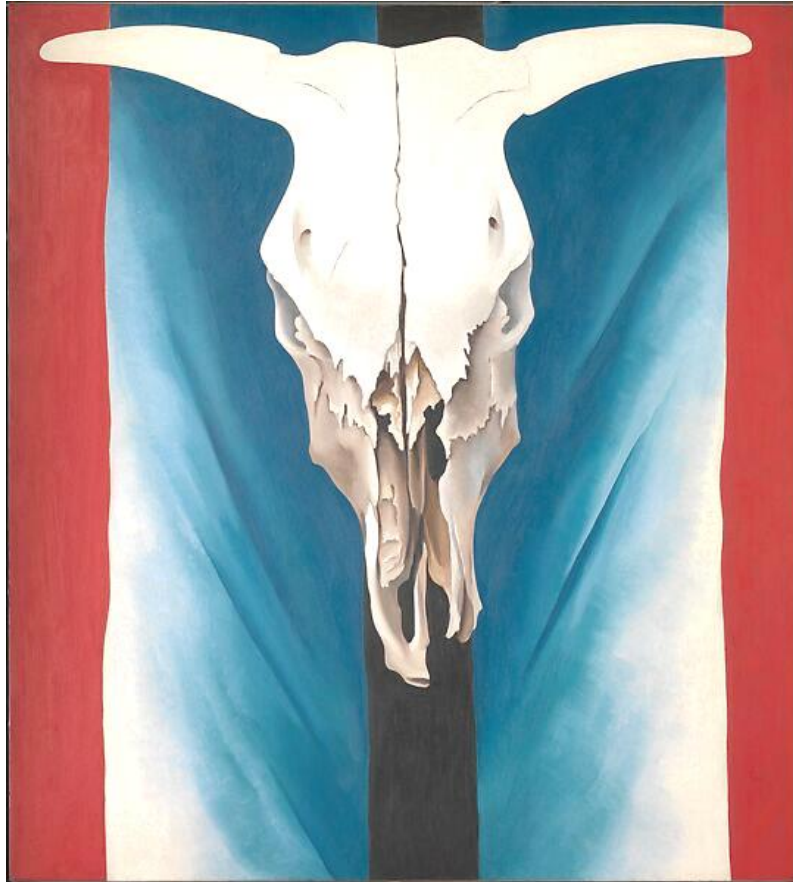
**Notable Work(s):** Day Dreams (*shown top left*)

**INSPIRE TO CREATE A SENSE OF JOY**



**Contributed to vitalization of bronze sculpture in America**

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## Notable Women Artists Throughout History

**Georgia O'Keeffe**

**Born:** 1887 (Sun Prairie, WI)

**Died:** 1986 (Santa Fe, NM)

**American Painter**

**Movement:** American Modernism

**Notable Work(s):** Cow's Skull (*shown left*)

**UNEXPECTED**

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***"To create one's world in any of the arts takes courage." – O'Keeffe***



# What makes an artist a 'notable' artist?

*Does great art, like beauty, always lie in the eye of the beholder? Or is it more?*

- **Technical skill**
  - Eye for detail, aesthetics
  - Understanding of color, balance, composition
  - Aptitude with materials
- Advanced sense of style
- **Creativity and imagination**
  - Ability to dream the unexpected
  - **Exceptional aptitude for story-telling**
- Strong passion
- Confident self-expression



*In the Loge* is the first of Cassatt's Impressionist works to be exhibited in the United States.

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*"Women should be someone and not something." ~Mary Cassatt*

## Technical Skill – Innate, Learned, Practiced

- **Painter** – mastery of color theory, brushwork, composition
- **Sculpture** – ability to understand form, balance, texture
- **Photographer** – grasp of lighting, exposure, focus
- **Jeweler** – attention to detail, composition and visual impact
- **Fiber Artist** – knowledge of textiles, connectivity, composition



*Girl Dancing* – Bessie Potter Vonnoh

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***Vonnoh embraced plaster as an accessible medium with possibilities.***

## Creativity and Imagination

- Takes risks
- Pushes boundaries
- Transforms ordinary into extraordinary
- Expands limits of possibility
- Finds beauty and meaning in unexpected places
- Possesses vision
- Challenges the viewer to the unexpected



Maria Longworth Nichols Storer for  
Rockwood Pottery, Early Limoges vase

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***Storer pushed social boundaries and had a lasting impact on Cincinnati.***

## Exceptional Story Telling Through Art

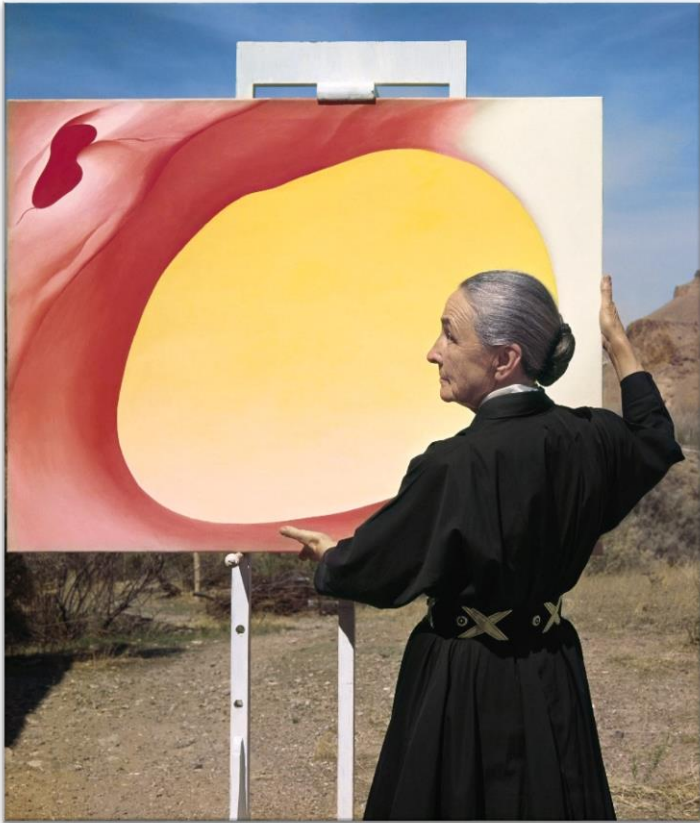
- Shows power of visual communication
- Uses color, composition, symbolism to create mood or theme
- Develops characters, settings, narratives to explore complex ideas and emotions
- Raises awareness to a cause
- Inspires to create sense of joy, wonder, reflection



*Still Life with a Pipe and Playing Cards*  
Claude Raguet Hirst

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***Hirst subtly critiques male culture.***



## Closing Thoughts and Encouragement

- Throughout **HIS**tory, and despite their contributions, female artists were (and are) often overlooked, forgotten.
- While the trend is changing, there's still a broad need for acceptance, recognition, and accolades for women artists.
- *Anything really worth doing takes persistence, perseverance, and stubborn determination!*

### I urge you to:

- Stand tall and be assertive
- Set clear goals
- Be brave – do scary things
- Keep showing up
- Create – and live – with grit & determination

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***Every great dream begins with a dreamer!***



Thank  
you

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