

A Century of Women in the Arts

1866-1966

A History of Art Course

The British Institute of Florence

13-24 March 2023

COURSE OVERVIEW

A Century of Women in the Arts: 1866-1966 covers the artistic, literary, scientific and political contributions of both local and foreign women with historical attachments to the Tuscan capital. Through blended lectures held at the British Institute Library and guided offsite visits to museums, galleries and foundations through the centre, A Century of Women in the Arts will introduce participants to works of art, archival materials and publications authored by protagonists including:

Susan Horner (1816-1900)
Vernon Lee (1856-1935)
Elisa Pante Zonaro (1863 -1945)
Candida Colosimo (1878-1972)
Leonetta Pieraccini (1882-1977)
Maria Lavinia Fiorilli (1884-1918)
Nerina Simi (1890-1987)
Anna Banti (1895-1985)
Iris Origo (1902-1988)
A.M. Enriques Angioletti (1907-1940)
Rita Levi Montalcini (1909-2012)
Natalia Ginzburg (1916-1991)
Teresa Mattei (1921-2013),

Amalia Dupré (1842-1928)
Maud Cruttwell (1859-1939)
Mary Berenson (1864-1945)
Dorothy Nevile Lees (1880-1966)
Fillide Giorgi Levasti (1883-1966)
Evelyn Scarampi (1890-1975)
Vittoria Morelli (1892-1931)
Elena Salvaneschi (1900-1961)
Lola Costa (1903-2006)
Marion Wulz (1905-1993)
Maria Luigia Guaita (1912-2007)
Maria Luisa Bonelli Righini (1917-1981)
Margherita Hack (1922-2013)

Janet Ross (1842-1927)
Nelly Erichsen (1862-1918)
Lina Waterfield (1874-1964)
Mina Loy (1882-1966)
Emma Bardini (1883-1962)
Élisabeth Chaplin (1890-1982)
Luisa Banti (1894-1978)
Marisa Mori (1900-1985)
Wanda Wulz (1903-1984)
Adriana Pincherle (1905-1996)
Flavia Arlotta (1913-2010)
Giulietta Fibbi (1920-2018)
Paola Barocchi (1927-2016)

Lectures can be followed in person, or online via zoom. Blended lectures are held and broadcast from the British Institute library on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, while visits are conducted on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons throughout Florence's historic centre.

MONDAYS	TUESDAYS	WEDNESDAYS	THURSDAYS	FRIDAYS
15:00 – 16:30 CET	15:00 – 16:30 CET	15:00 – 16:30 CET	15:00 – 16:30 CET	15:00 – 16:30 CET
Blended Lectures	Offsite Visits	Blended Lectures	Offsite Visits	Blended Lectures

The international teaching team offers a spectrum of expertise and approaches to teaching, while the department 'house style' of lecturing is informal, relaxed, engaging and participatory. Our courses are accessible to those coming to the subject with no previous background in Art History, but are at the same time pitched at a level that will engage all those who are already familiar with the subject. This course can be followed in full, by week, or by individual session:

REGISTRATION FEES	€
Single Sessions in Florence (90 MIN)	40
FULL COURSE: 10 Sessions in Florence (90 MIN)	390
Single Sessions Online (90 MIN)	15
6 Sessions Online (90 MIN)	90

WEEK ONE

(This programme is provisional and subject to revision)

MONDAY



Course Introduction; Women of the British Institute This lecture will establish the scope and contents of the course and offer a survey of the British Institute Archive's special collections of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century material devoted to individuals and families with a particular connection to Florence, including English travellers passing through the city on tour, and others whose long-term residence led them to be known as the Anglo-Florentines.

TUESDAY



Historical walk: The Florence they knew This visit will offer an historical and topographical introduction to Florence's centre, with particular emphasis on the lasting itineraries established for foreigners during the Age of the Grand Tour, as well as the social and urban modernisation of Florence during the second half of the nineteenth century as documented by travel writers and visitors in the early years of national unity.

WEDNESDAY



1866-1886: Nation and Capital This lecture will examine the iconographic vocabulary of Risorgimento Italy, the role of Florence as second national capital (1865-1871) and the appropriation of history and genre painting traditions as promoted by the Accademia delle Belle Arti and local authorities in constructing a national identity for the Italian State.

THURSDAY



VISIT: The Galleria d'Arte Moderna at Palazzo Pitti This visit will survey a range of different artistic techniques and major stylistic currents and personalities of 19th- and early 20th-century Tuscan painting through the collection of the Modern Art Gallery at Palazzo Pitti, including works by Élisabeth Chaplin, Adriana Pincherle, Leonetta Cecchi Pieraccini and Fillide Giorgi Levasti and their contemporaries.

FRIDAY



1886-1906: Beyond the Victorians This lecture will highlight the role of resident women as artists, collectors, travel writers and art historians in late nineteenth-century Florence including, Vernon Lee, Maud Cruttwell, Mary Berenson and Emma Bardini through surviving correspondences and diaries preserved in local Florentine archival holdings including the British Institute Archive, the Archivio Storico Eredità Bardini and the Historic Archives of Harvard University Center for Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti.

WEEK TWO

(This programme is provisional and subject to revision)

MONDAY



1906-1926: Foundations of Feminism This lecture will consider the social, artistic and literary scene of Florence in the early years of the Twentieth century through the art and writings of British futurist Mina Loy, produced during her ten-year residence in Florence, including the publication of her landmark *Feminist Manifesto* of 1914, as well as the later cultural impact of the Great War and important early milestones of Women's Suffrage in the UK and Italy.

TUESDAY



VISIT: The Museo Novecento This visit will explore the collections of the *Museum of Contemporary Art of Florence*, better known as the Museo Novecento, housed since 2014 on the premises of the ancient Hospital of San Paolo that later became one of the important *Scuole Leopoldine* for girls in the Eighteenth century. Today the museum features works from important bequests such as the Alberto Della Ragione and Aldo Palazzeschi collections.

WEDNESDAY



1926-1946: Heroes This lecture will reimagine the setting of Florence during the rule of the National Fascist Party from the perspective of women artists, activists, partisans and constituents that all contributed to the creation of the Italian Republic, including Lola Costa, Rita Levi Montalcini, Natalia Ginzburg, Anna Maria Enriques Agnoletti, Giulietta Fibbi and Teresa Mattei.

THURSDAY



VISIT: The Fondazione Bisonte This visit will explore the legacy of Maria Luigia Guaita, author of Prato Prize winning Resistance memoir *Storie di un anno grande* and, following her study of lithography under Anna Redpath in Edinburgh, founder of print studio Il Bisonte in Florence through a guided tour of the Foundation and the printmaking studios still operating in the historic stables of the Palazzo Serristori.

FRIDAY



1946-1966: New histories This lecture will chart the reconstruction of Florence following the Second World War, a time when many of its civic institutions and artistic and scholarly traditions were maintained by pioneering women directors, art historians and educators including Nerina Simi, Luisa Banti, Anna Banti, Maria Luisa Bonelli Righini, Margherita Hack and Paola Barocchi.

WOMEN OF THE CENTURY

In the century that began with Florence's short-lived stint as capital of Italy and ended with the devastating flood of 1966, who were the women that were making a name for themselves in the city?

Influenced by Reform movements in Great Britain, France and the United States, Italy's first feminist biweekly journal *La Donna* (Woman) was launched in 1868. In Italy, the emancipation of women, known as 'the woman's *Risorgimento*' was closely linked to the unification of the Italian states in 1861. In this new political landscape, women hoped to break free of the traditional stereotypes to which they had been confined, and to play a more active role in the life of the nation. Italian feminists championed women's suffrage, greater autonomy within marriage and reform of labour laws to protect women and children.

In the century that followed, women slowly began to take steps towards equality and to acquire rights that men took for granted. However, it was not until after WW2 that women were given the right to vote in national elections and to be elected to government positions, and not until the 1970's that laws were introduced regulating divorce and abortion. Even now, there is a gender pay gap of 11.5% in favour of men; and the percentage of women in the Italian parliament lags at around 36%. Italy, like so many other nations, is anchored on patriarchal legacies of past centuries.

In this context, the achievements of the artists, writers and social activists in 'A Century of Women in the Arts' are all the more remarkable. At the turn of the last century, women writers were not highly regarded in the literary world and many published under male pseudonyms, women artists were still not permitted to attend life drawing classes, and other talented women were effectively barred from entering most professions. Despite many doors being closed to them – or perhaps because of this – the women covered in this course achieved success in many overlapping spheres.

How was this possible? Paradoxically, Florence has a history of being more accommodating to women artists than other European cities. Florence's Accademia delle Arti del Disegno admitted more women, and far earlier, than London's Royal Academy. Similarly, the Uffizi Gallery gave women permission to copy works of the Masters within a year of its opening in 1769, a practice enthusiastically taken up by professional female painters (such as Violante Siries Cerotti), as well as by women on the Grand Tour. In contrast, women seen copying at the Louvre in Paris as late as 1831 were looked at askance, their presence in a public space raising questions about their virtue. In Florence, the ex-pat community found it easier to ignore the social constraints with which they would have felt bound in their home countries. Women presided over the artistic salons of Bellosguardo and Fiesole, where the emerging trends of Futurism and Modernism were debated.

Among the names to be encountered here, Mina Loy was an artist, poet, novelist and designer; Iris Origo was a biographer, diarist and social reformer; Natalia Ginzburg, a writer of fiction and non-fiction, later became a prominent politician. Sisters Wanda and Marion Wulz took over the family photography business, experimenting with new techniques and embracing the innovations of the Futurist movement. Life-long friends Leonetta Pieraccini and Fillide Levasti encouraged each other through years of correspondence to pursue their artistic and literary careers even while contending with the needs of their young children. While largely self-taught, artist Elisabeth Chaplin incorporated a range of influences in her paintings, and drew inspiration from her family and home in Fiesole.

These are women who were driven by talent and conviction to express themselves and to change the world around them to reflect their lives – lives that were often difficult but never dull. Their achievements, though under-appreciated, are significant, and their stories are, by turns, fascinating, entertaining and inspiring. In collaboration with the British Institute of Florence, Calliope Arts is pleased to be restoring these women to their rightful place in the history of art in Florence.

Margie MacKinnon
Calliope Arts, co-founder



S. REPARATA