



The subject of art history in university studies from a gender perspective. Analysis and proposals for its application

La asignatura de Historia del arte en los estudios universitarios bajo la perspectiva de género. Análisis y propuestas para su aplicación

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Abstract:

Art history education in the university context continues to transmit the same obvious sexist bias that permeates the discipline even today. In order to recover the erased memory of women artists and problematize their absence/presence in history, this paper analyzes the current situation of the basic subject History of Art taught at different levels of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Alicante. Likewise, opportunities are identified for the introduction of a gender perspective in the subject that makes it possible to adapt the educational resources to the current social and academic reality. Finally, a proposal for the application of the gender perspective is presented, carried out during the 2022/23 academic year, which focuses its efforts on those areas that are most difficult to modify in practice: the contents and bibliography of the subject.

Keywords: Art History, Gender Perspective, University, teaching, women.

Resumen:

La educación de la historia del arte en el ámbito universitario sigue transmitiendo el mismo evidente sesgo sexista que atraviesa la disciplina aún hoy en día. Con el objetivo de recuperar la memoria borrada de las mujeres artistas y problematizar su ausencia/presencia en la historia, esta investigación analiza la situación actual de la asignatura de formación básica Historia del arte, impartida en diferentes grados de la facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Alicante. Asimismo, se identifican las oportunidades para la introducción de una perspectiva de género en la asignatura que posibilite adaptar los recursos educativos empleados a la realidad social y académica actual. Por último, se presenta una propuesta de aplicación de la perspectiva de género, llevada a cabo durante el curso 2022/23, que centra sus esfuerzos en aquellos ámbitos más difíciles de modificar en la práctica: los contenidos y la bibliografía de la asignatura.

Palabras clave: historia del arte, perspectiva de género, Universidad, docencia, mujeres.



1. Introduction

This research revolves around the problem of the lack of gender perspective in the hegemonic discourse of Western art history, which is transferred, full of shortcomings and stereotypes, to the educational sphere and, consequently, to the teaching of the discipline itself at the university level. The way of understanding art history from an androcentric perspective that excludes women and other groups outside the modern male subject of knowledge is deeply rooted in culture. Since its inception, art historians have eliminated women, the memory of their lives and their work from historical memory and have belittled the areas in which they developed their creativity, leaving new generations without female artistic role models (Fernández, 2001; López, 2011).

Fortunately, this canonical art history has been challenged by feminist art researchers and historians, who have been developing a large body of scientific literature since approximately the 1970s in the Anglo-Saxon world and the 1990s in Spain (Nochlin, 1971; Parker and Pollock, 1981; Combalía, 2006; De Diego, 1987; Mayayo, 2003). In recent decades, academic feminism, parallel to feminist social movements, has had an impact on multiple fields. The social sciences, the humanities, and specifically art history have benefited from the debates introduced by feminist epistemology (Harding, 1986), in a context of institutional criticism characteristic of postmodernity and the development of social art history (Hauser, 1951).

Along these lines, research has been undertaken in the university context that sees education as a vehicle for social transformation, based on the premise that “the invisibility of women in textbooks leads students of all ages to subconsciously assume that it is men who have led the great actions of humanity” (García-Sinausía and Valtierra, 2021, p. 253). As Parker and Pollock (1981) pointed out decades ago, we must refute the lies about the non-existence of women artists or, in the case of those who have been admitted, the idea that they were second-rate.

However, as we will see throughout this text, there is still much to be done to transform the history of art and its education into a more critical, open, diverse, and up-to-date field of knowledge in favor of gender equality. Proposals such as this research aim to contribute to this, as researcher Antonia Fernández Valencia rightly points out:

Teachers must bring theoretical and methodological innovations in different scientific disciplines into the classroom in order to contribute, on an ongoing basis, to updating the social conception of these disciplines and to stimulating students' interest in new fields of study. (2001, p. 11).

1.1 Laws and regulatory frameworks support change

The legal framework supporting the introduction of the gender perspective in universities is broad, both internationally (Fifth European Framework Program for

Research and Innovation, 1998-2002; Action Plan of the Women and Science Unit, 1999) and nationally (Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between men and women, Article 25; Organic Law 1/2004 on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence, Article 4.7; Law 9/2003 of the Generalitat, for Equality between Women and Men, Article 9).

The recently enacted Organic Law 2/2023, of March 22, on the Spanish University System (LOSU), explicitly states the importance of “educating citizens through the transmission of democratic values and principles” (Article 2). In addition, it highlights the integration of gender equality in research (Article 13) and the general role of the university, which, according to the legislative text, “shall be guided by human and fundamental rights, democratic memory, the promotion of equity and equality, the promotion of sustainability, the fight against climate change, and the values derived from the Sustainable Development Goals” (Article 12).

To understand how these ambitious goals are being achieved, it is interesting to look not only at the regulations but also at the actions promoted by each university's equality units, as they are the ones with the powers assigned in this area. In the context of the University of Alicante (UA), the IV Equal Opportunities Plan 2022-2025 is clear on this point. The section on teaching (axis 2) includes, among other objectives, “promoting, disseminating, and accrediting knowledge on gender equality” and “integrating the gender perspective into university teaching.” Within this second objective, there is mention of actions to incorporate the gender perspective into the teaching guides for UA degrees, specifically “in the objectives, content, use of inclusive language, and assessment” (UA, 2022, action 2.6).

A recent report¹ analyzing the level of inclusion of the gender perspective in the degree programs offered at the UA, based on the teaching guides for their courses, provides future lines of work that may constitute priority action points. Two of these relate to the content of the subjects. Firstly, it proposes making gender training compulsory and fundamental in undergraduate studies, incorporating this dimension as an essential pillar of university education and in all disciplines, with a twofold aim: to equip students with the knowledge and skills to enable them to identify the impact of gender in their future professional practice.

Secondly, it aims to highlight the mechanisms of exclusion that operate in the scientific system and, in general, in society.

All these indications open up opportunities for us to introduce the gender perspective as a complex phenomenon, working to recover the lives and artistic works of women. However, not only that, also deconstructing the sexist structures that permeate academic knowledge. Following Parker

¹ This report, published in 2021, contains data on the situation of the gender perspective and teaching in the universities that form part of the Xarxa Vives network in Spain, France, Italy, and Andorra, and is available at <https://www3.vives.org/publicacions/arxius/pu13.pdf> [08/30/2023].

and Pollock (1981), this requires tracing the changing definitions of artist and woman in order to decipher how women have been subjects in the changing relationships between patriarchy and society over the centuries. In the words of Sonia Reverter (2022),

The aim will therefore be to create a new interpretative framework that allows us not only to recover silenced voices and knowledge but also to organize and produce knowledge differently; that is, with a commitment to equality, diversity, and social justice. (p. 10).

1.2 The gender perspective as a methodological approach in university teaching

Reverter (2022) discusses two different ways of introducing the gender perspective into university teaching: across the board and through specialized courses. However, he warns that neither formula is entirely effective on its own, but that both must be applied in combination for there to be a fundamental transformation in the structure of the educational project.

Other authors propose establishing specific competencies on gender equality in teaching guides to encourage the introduction of the gender perspective in university studies (Marín and Giménez, 2022). In the case of the UA, the institution where this research is being conducted, the current Equality Plan states that only on rare occasions are specific competencies and objectives on gender or equality included in the content section of teaching guides and that, in addition, less than 16 percent of degrees have one-third of female authors among the total bibliographic references for their subjects (UA, 2022, p. 29). It is therefore difficult to determine whether or not the gender perspective is being incorporated into two fundamental aspects of the subjects: content and recommended bibliography.

About this process of implementing equality guidelines and feminist discourse in the classroom, researchers such as Rosalía Torrent (2022) point to the fundamental role played by teachers and their desire to change things. Indeed, as the author explains, gender studies are present in specialized publications, but their application in teaching has not yet become widespread.

Recent research has reflected on the introduction of the gender perspective in teaching, particularly noteworthy among which are those that address art history studies in teacher training (Díez et al., 2017; Rebollar, 2013; Triviño, 2014). (Rausell and Talavera, 2017; Rausell and Valls, 2021), History (Bolufer, 2018; Torrent, 2022) and art history (Caballero, 2022; Marín and Giménez, 2022; Moreno and Vera, 2016; Olmedo et al., 2019; Sanjuán, 2015).

However, most studies on the absence of women artists in current curricula are limited almost entirely to analyzing primary and secondary education (García-Sinausía and Valtierra, 2021; García et al., 2023; Sanjuán, 2020). It is worth highlighting the work of teachers in compulsory secondary education who are making efforts to introduce

the gender perspective at earlier stages of education. This research, therefore, aims to provide an analysis and a proposal for introductory art history courses taught at universities in Alicante, to contribute, as far as possible, to progress in incorporating the gender perspective in this field.

2. Materials and methods

The Art History course is a compulsory semester-long introductory and general subject offered in the first year of the History, Geography and Land Management, and Humanities degrees at the UA. It consists of a theoretical part and two different types of practical work. At the end of the course, there is a multiple-choice test to assess students' understanding of the concepts, categories, basic vocabulary, styles, works, and key artists covered in the theory sessions.

2.1. Phases of the research

Taking into account the characteristics of the subject and the issues that, as we have been explaining, are currently being discussed in academic feminism, art history, higher education, and legislation for the achievement of equality in university studies, the fundamental aspects of the subject are analyzed first. This is achieved through reflective commentary on the teaching guide, which serves as the primary source of information and observation of opportunities to introduce critical and feminist perspectives into teaching practice. The questions that guide the analysis are as follows:

- Is the gender perspective present in the objectives and competencies?
- Is the gender perspective present in the content and recommended reading list?
- Is the gender perspective present in the assessment?

To try to answer these questions, we based our analysis on the work carried out by two organizations. On the one hand, the University, Teaching, Gender, and Equality Network, coordinated by M^a José Rodríguez Jaume. On the other hand, the Network for the Implementation of Gender Perspective in Teaching at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (Philology) is coordinated by Professor Herminia Provencio Garrigós. Both have developed a series of recommendations and self-assessment tools (UA, 2023) so that teaching staff at the UA's Faculty of Philosophy and Letters can assess gender bias in the formal or explicit curriculum and the hidden curriculum (Maceira, 2005) of the undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by this faculty (Provencio and Arráez, 2016).

We therefore draw on the questions in Table 1, as they focus specifically on our area of interest: the content, objectives, bibliography, and assessment of the course. We are interested in knowing whether the contributions of women scientists in the discipline are valued, the existence or absence of female protagonists, gender stereotypes in

the narrative of artistic styles and works, gender-based social inequalities present in art history, and the treatment of difference and intersectionality.

Secondly, a detailed analysis of the recommended bibliographic references is carried out, which will be the sources of information in this second phase, to check whether we find women artists in the texts of the recommended books and, if so, what place they occupy within the narrative. That is, whether they are simply mentioned or whether any aspect of their biography or work is developed.

Finally, a proposal for introducing the gender perspective into the subject is presented, which has been carried out during the 2022/23 academic year in a group of 30 students over a semester, in the context of undergraduate studies in History, Humanities, and Geography and Land Management at the UA. To reflect on its implementation, the analysis tool described in phase one is used, and the aspects that have favored the realization of the gender perspective are highlighted, as well as the difficulties encountered along the way.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Analysis of competencies, bibliography, content, and assessment

The course content is organized conventionally, in styles framed in large blocks (ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary), following the introductory sections and sections analyzing and interpreting the works. This way of understanding art history, as a meta-narrative of the evolution of male genius, has, as we know, been criticized for decades by feminists for perpetuating a sexist and exclusionary art canon (López, 2011). However, the teaching guide does not mention this aspect or specify problems related to the absence or recovery of women's memory.

All of this leads us to believe that the historical inequality in representation between men and women is not perceived as a specific problem and that, therefore, there is no need to make any changes in this regard. However, there are some cracks in this static approach to art history. These cracks generate a certain structural instability, but at the same time allow some rays of light to filter through.

Tabla 1. Currículum oculto y los recursos docentes

Fuente: Provencio y Arráez, 2026, p. 2643

Hidden Curriculum: Teaching Resources	YES	No	NS/NC
Do I check whether the materials I provide highlight the contributions of women scientists?			
Do I check whether the materials I provide feature women as protagonists in the content being conveyed?			
Do I check whether the materials I provide convey stereotypes or an androcentric view?			
Do I highlight gender inequalities and inequities in any of the topics covered in the course?			
Do I take into account the consequences that comments/explanations/examples may have on students in terms of identity: sexual, racial, ethnic, religious, national, etc.?			

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For example, the general competencies for the subject of History (CG1, CG8), Geography and Land Management (CG10), and Humanities (CG1, CG4) refer to critical thinking, recognition of diversity, equality, and ethical commitment. There is no mention of gender inequality, but there is mention of raising awareness, a criticism which, when applied to gender differences, could offer the possibility of raising questions about the lack of female authors in history, how women and men are represented in the iconography studied, or the values that are transmitted and promoted in the readings of the works from a gender perspective.

Furthermore, in some specific competencies (History, CE1) and educational objectives, art history is presented as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. We could therefore consider that this subject is susceptible to change, connections with other areas of knowledge, and allows for multiple interpretations. Thus, if we consider the advances made by feminist studies in art history, we see that it is indeed possible to open up spaces for transformation.

However, a first glance at the bibliographical references in the teaching guide for the subject confirms that there are no recommended books that deal either encyclopedically or specifically with the lives and creations of women artists, even though in recent years. Over the years, several monographs have been published on this subject, as will be seen below.

In terms of figures, as we can see in Table 2, there is an underrepresentation of women artists in the books that make up the recommended bibliography. The vast majority do not include any, which is hardly surprising given the conclusions of similar studies (Rebollar, 2013; Bel, 2016). In our case, very few books feature more than twenty women on their pages. Considering the volume of

information contained in these manuals, the number of women we find in them is anecdotal. It is therefore easy to conclude that, in general, the bibliographical references are out of date.

In general terms, the books that review more women are also the most recent, but this is not always the case. For example, Antón Chapitel and Carlos Reyero have both published in the new millennium. However, they include 0 and 3 women, respectively. Likewise, we could assume that books focusing on modern or contemporary art should contain more references to women artists simply because of their proximity our era. However, authors such as Amy Dempsey and Valeriano Bozal (both of whom address contemporary art and postmodernism in their works) include little information and very few female artists. Despite being the authors who introduce the most women, it is mainly their names that appear. For example, of the 47 women artists in Valeriano Bozal's text, only 11 are mentioned in terms of their lives, and their works are analyzed. In Dempsey's case, out of 77, only 16 female authors have any of their works commented on.

Therefore, it is possible to observe a specific relationship between the temporal proximity of the editions and the

artistic periods studied, and the appearance of women artists. However, their presence or absence is not a question of artistic or literary relevance in the bibliographical references, but instead of (lack of) perspective. Take, for example, the Spanish edition of Amy Dempsey, a work that includes a greater number of women artists. It has been coordinated by Anna María Guasch, an expert in contemporary art studies who is no stranger to the importance of feminism in recent art (Guasch, 2000). Not surprisingly, Dempsey herself (2008) states that she finds the idea of not including women ridiculous and that researching them, as well as other groups, is essential.

Sometimes, when women creators are approached, it is archaic and sexist. As Marian López Fernández-Cao (2011) states, when female artists appear in encyclopedias and manuals, they are treated differently and their absence and dependence on men are highlighted, their personal lives are valued more than their professional careers, and their works are often interpreted from parameters that fit the stereotypical idea of femininity. This is the case, for example, in Frederic Hartt's textbook (1989), which justifies historical amnesia in his book with a biologicistic (implying that it is an unchanging reality, impossible to modify) and stereotypical argument:

Tabla 2: Referencias bibliográficas en la guía didáctica de la asignatura UA

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Reference (book)	Authors	Chronological	Generalist?	No. of female artists	Year of first edition	AYear and edition consulted
Boardman, John	1 male author	Ancient Egypt - Hellenism	Greek art	0	1964	2002 (4 ^a ed)
Capitel, Antón	1 male author	Renaissance - Contemporary	Architecture	0	2009	2009
Bianchi Bandinelli, Ranuccio; Torelli, Mario	2 male authors	Etruria - Rome	Italian art	0	1986	2000
Blanco Freijeiro, Antonio. León Alonso, Pilar.	1 male author. 1 female author of the revised preliminary study	Cretan - Hellenism	Yes	0	1956	2011 (3rd ed)
Grabar, Oleg	1 male author	622 BC – 1005 AD	Islamic art	0	1973	1990 (6th ed)
Lafuente-Ferrari, Enrique	1 male author	Paleolithic – 19th century	Spanish art	0	1934	1987 (5th ed)
Zabalbeascoa, Anatxu; Rodríguez Marcos, Javier	1 male author, 1 female author	1377 - 1943	Architecture	0	1998	1998
Gombrich, Ernst H.	1 male author	Prehistory – Avant-garde	Yes	1	1950	1994 (16th ed)
Chastel, André	1 male author	311 – 1970s	Italian art	2	1982	1988
Reyero, Carlos	1 male author	19th century	Yes	3	2014	2014
Argan, Giulio Carlo; Bonito Oliva, Achille	2 male authors	1950 - 1990	Yes	4	1992	1992
Wittkower, Rudolf	1 male author	1600 - 1750	Italian art	4	1979	2007 (12th ed)
Argan, Giulio Carlo	1 male author	Neoclassical – 1970s	Yes	5	1977	1977
Ramírez, Juan Antonio (Ed.)	26 authors, 6 female authors	Ancient world – Contemporary world	Yes	11	1996	2005
Janson, Horst	4 male authors, 1 female author	Ancient world – Modern world	Yes	12	1986	1990 (3rd ed)
Honour, Hugh; Fleming, John	2 male authors	Neolithic - Postmodernism	Yes	24	1982	2002 (6th ed)
Hartt, Frederick	1 male author	Paleolithic – 1980	Yes	26	1985	1989
Bozal, Valeriano	1 male author	20th century	Spanish art	47	1995	2000 (4th ed)
Dempsey, Amy	1 female author	1860 - 2000	Yes	77	2002	2008 (2nd ed)

Part of the explanation for the exclusion of women from artistic endeavors, as well as other fields, must undoubtedly be sought in their physical status in the era before modern medicine. [...] A woman tied to domestic life and constant pregnancies could hardly participate in other more strenuous physical activities [...] Even painting, in the Renaissance, was a strenuous activity carried out on scaffolding, constantly carrying sacks of sand and mud and pots of water. The only known female artists of antiquity painted portraits, which could be done in comfortable studios. Unfortunately, however, their work has been lost. (pp. 21-22).

Perhaps the author did not take into account the kind of physical and domestic tasks that women performed in the 14th-16th centuries, particularly those who were of modest social standing or poor. Nor did he probably think of female artists such as the Mannerist painter Lavinia Fontana, who gave birth to 11 children, was an artist at the papal court, and ran her painting studio.

Another aspect worth highlighting is how often women artists are presented in these works as partners or wives of, or generally affiliated with, a male artist who is usually given more space in the text.

The harmful effects of identifying female artists as wives or relatives of other artists rather than as creators have been pointed out by authors such as García-Sinausía and Valtierra (2021). The insistence on making their achievements invisible continues to reinforce unequal power relations between men and women to the detriment of the latter. Furthermore, defining the identity of female artists in terms of their role as wives or partners shifts the focus away from their artistic activity. It reinforces gender differences in art and society. Furthermore, women have historically been relegated to mere passive sources of inspiration, since “almost every artistic movement from the 19th century onwards has women whose contributions have been erased or defined by their outdated role as muses” (McCabe, 2021, p. 14).

While it is important to study the life, work, and style of an artist, it is important to remember that we must stop identifying the person who creates as an isolated entity linked to the figure of the male creative genius. Both men and women have been nurtured and supported by their partners, networks, and communities. Professional and emotional resources to create. However, canonical art history has emphasized the supposed genius and independence of male artists to explain their lives and artistic production. From a gender perspective, this is relevant, since the celebration of only a few selected (male) milestones constitutes the core of patriarchal history (McIntosh, 2019) and the myth of male individuality (Hernando, 2022) as the basis of that history. From this approach, it is possible to see the need to study the context of creation and the circumstances that have hindered and enabled the production of art in each historical moment. Furthermore, in this way, we aim to raise awareness of how sexism operates to the detriment of women and other minority groups.

Finally, regarding the course assessment, no criteria with a gender perspective are explicitly stated.

3.2. Proposal for the introduction of a gender perspective in the Art History course

By conceptualizing gender perspective as a methodological tool, as previously expressed, and based on the analysis of the subject at hand, the proposal presented here is structured around three axes: bibliography, content selection for theoretical sessions and practical activities, and theoretical and practical assessment.

Firstly, new bibliographical references are introduced: Women Artists (Frigeri, 2020), Women Painting History. Las chicas del óleo. Pintoras y escultoras anteriores a 1789 (Del Río, 2010), Historia del arte sin hombres (Hessel, 2022), Historias de mujeres, historias del arte (Mayayo, 2003), More Than a Muse: Creative Relationships That Eclipsed Women (McCabe, 2021), Bauhaus Mädels (Rössler, 2019), and Women and Painting in 19th-Century Spain. Four Hundred Forgotten Women and a Few More (De Diego, 1987). These works have been selected for their focus on the lives and careers of women artists and as current sources of introductory information on art history.

One difficulty associated with the bibliography search has been the scarcity of encyclopedic or monographic publications on art history with a clear gender perspective. Compared to the sources that support the official discourse, there are still very few that question it and provide new information about female artists. It has also been challenging to attribute credibility to new hypotheses or theories about works attributed to men, which are speculated to have been created or co-produced by women. This is the case with the debate surrounding Duchamp's world-famous 1917 work, *Fontaine*, which, according to recent research (Durán, 2013; Gammel, 2011; Hustvedt, 2019)¹. Nor does the resistance of museums and other institutions with authoritative voices in art to include women in their permanent exhibitions help (Ballesteros, 2016; López and Fernández, 2018). On the other hand, new research projects² and exhibitions are appearing every day where we can find leading artists (Reverter, 2022; Mujeres en las Artes Visuales [MAV], 2020 and 2021).

As for resources for theory sessions, new teaching materials

1 This theory was developed in an exhibition in Edinburgh entitled *A Lady is not a Gent's*, curated in 2015 by Gly Thompson and Julian Spalding, as part of the Summerhall Festival in Edinburgh. <https://festival15.summerhall.co.uk/exhibition/a-ladys-not-a-gents/index.html>

2 The research project Women Artists in the Spanish Cultural Scene and Their Relationship with Europe, 1803-1945 (PID2020-117133GB-I00) was carried out between 2018 and 2021 by researchers from the universities of Seville, Valencia, Zaragoza, and Complutense Madrid, with the collaboration of other Spanish and European institutions. It is funded by the State Agency for Research of the Ministry of Science and Innovation (Government of Spain). It has resulted in exhibitions and publications on Spanish women artists written by Concha Lomba Serrano, Ester Alba Págán, Alberto Castán Chocarro, and Magdalena Illán Martín. The project website is <https://maes.unizar.es/>. Also, the research project Women's Legacy: Michael the Archangel by Luisa Roldán. Our Cultural Heritage for Equity 2020-2023 within the European Erasmus framework + Brings together educational resources on women's productions in art generated in collaboration with Spain, Scotland, Lithuania, and Italy. Its website is <https://womenslegacyproject.eu/es/home/>

are being incorporated and made accessible to students through the University of Alicante's virtual campus.

In the first two blocks of the course (Introduction to Art History and Analysis and Interpretation of Works of Art), the aim is to provide an introduction to the most important debates in the discipline promoted by feminist art history, which we have highlighted throughout this article. Thus, we propose to reflect on the importance of context in understanding women's artistic productions, analyze the stereotypical representation of women in painting, sculpture, and other visual media, problematize the role of the woman as muse, and offer theoretical foundations for feminist art history and criticism.

In the Ancient World and Medieval World sections, we reflect on the classical ideal of beauty about female and male gender stereotypes. We also look at women's participation in artistic creation in the religious sphere through the figure of Christine de Pizan.

Finally, the section on the modern and contemporary world provides a list of important women artists in each historical-artistic period or style. In modern art, the list includes Ana María Luisa de Medici (patron), Sofonisba Anguissola, Sor Plautilla Nelli, Marietta Robusti La Tintoretta, Properzia de' Rossi, Luisa Roldán La Roldana, Artemisia Gentilleschi, Mari Moser, Angelica Kauffmann, Vigée Le Brun, Adelaide Labille-Guiard, Clara Peeters, Judith Leyster, and Élisabeth-Sophie Chéron. In terms of contemporary art, Rosa Bonheur, Elisabeth Eleanor Sidall, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, Eva Gonzalès, Marie Bracquemond, María Blanchard, Maruja Mallo, Juana Francés, Frida Kahlo, Gunta Stölz, Ana Mendieta, Judy Chicago, Ester Ferrer, and Elena Asins and Remedios Varó are studied.

It should be noted that in the four thematic sections, the works of art created by these artists serve to explain the artistic periods in which they are historically framed, so that these works are not analyzed as isolated entities, but as examples of the style and aesthetic forms of each era.

In addition, this proposal develops other participatory classroom activities based on selected sources of information and carried out in the form of classroom debates, prepared in advance in small groups of four people. The first is based on an article (Fernández, 2007) accompanying *La Ciudad de las Damas* (Lemarchand and Cirlot, 2018), to broaden reflection on this paradigmatic work of the early stages of feminism about artistic and literary creation. The second activity focuses on *Queridas viejas*, an artistic work by María Gimeno³ that attempts to correct the mistake made by art historian Ernst Gombrich when he failed to include women artists in his world-renowned History of Art. The materials used are the performance and documentation related to the research project.

³ The audiovisual recording comes from the performance held at the CCCB in Barcelona in 2019 and can be found, along with the rest of the documentation, on the artist's official website <https://www.mariagimeno.com/>

The dissemination of artists' lives through social media is also included in this proposal, as we believe that using information sources that are close to students' everyday experience is positive (Moreno and Vera, 2016). Throughout the sessions, traditional conceptual references are combined with other educational resources, such as those provided by the association *La Roldana Plataforma por la inclusión de las mujeres en el currículum* (*La Roldana Platform for the Inclusion of Women in the Curriculum*), Concha Mayordomo's blog, and the Instagram profiles of *femme. sapiens*, the great women artists, *eugenia tenenbaum*, whose protagonists are authors who have recently published the following monographs: *Ni musas ni sumisas* (Satoca, 2022), *Historia del arte sin hombres* (Hessel, 2022), *La mirada inquieta* (Tenenbaum, 2022), and *Las mujeres detrás de Picasso* (Tenenbaum, 2023).

These sources, disseminated through various channels, incorporate recommendations from students, other teachers, and social media interactions, often presenting the problem of validating knowledge. However, they can always serve as triggers that offer clues about new artists to discover.

As for problem-solving exercises, a work by a female artist is included in each of the four groups into which the class is divided. The works are illustrations from *The City of Ladies* by Christine de Pizan, *Giuseppe e la moglie di Putifarre* by Properzia de Rossi, and *Saint Michael the Archangel* by Luisa Roldán. Such as *La Roldana*, Sculptures from the south facade of Strasbourg Cathedral by Sabina de Steinbach, and *Still Life with Flowers and a Silver Cup* by Clara Peeters.

About assessment, this proposal is in line with an inclusive vision, where women are not incidental or optional, but are part of the body of knowledge of the subject. Consequently, the selection of artists for practical exercises includes women, as we have seen, and the theoretical exam introduces questions about works by female authors or that relate a particular artistic style to the author in question. On the other hand, as a positive result, it should be noted that the students of the 2022/2023 academic year have mostly chosen female artists to work on their seminar practical assignments. The topics they have selected are Post-Impressionism and Vincent Van Gogh, French Neoclassicism, Contemporary Art and Yayoi Kusama, Romanticism and Carlota Rosales, Surrealism and Maruja Mallo, and finally, Impressionism and Mary Cassatt. This demonstrates a special interest in women and provides clues about the students' openness to an updated, diverse, and inclusive art history. Thus, we can infer that, in the specific context of a course that pays attention to the stories of traditionally silenced women and reflects on gender inequalities in art, female authors are considered by students to be as important as or more important than male authors for their assessment.

4. Conclusions

This research shows that there are opportunities for feminist intervention in the teaching of art history at the UA. However, we can conclude that the recommended bibliography remains rooted in the past in many respects, is outdated, and sometimes promotes alarming sexist stereotypes. In addition, the curriculum needs to be adapted in terms of content, objectives, and competencies to comply with relevant legislation on equality. This study, therefore, demonstrates the need for changes in this regard.

In the 2022/23 academic year, the proposal to introduce a gender perspective discussed here has been well received and has sparked great interest in the lives and work of women artists in art history. Through the incorporation of new references to women art historians, critics, and artists, it has been proven that it is possible to open up knowledge to works and lives that have been relegated to oblivion for decades by the official discourse. It is also possible to reinterpret the past through practical activities and to consider women artists as a fundamental part of history through an evaluation that includes them. Finally, it can contribute to making us more aware of inequalities in society, and specifically in art history.

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