



Why Have There Been No Great Women Museologists? The Herstory of Museology in Poland

Interdisciplinary academic conference

Royal Łazienki Museum, Royal Theatre in the Old Orangery

8–9 October 2024

With reference to Linda Nochlin's essay *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* published in 1971, and once again published in Polish with a commentary in 2023, it is permissible and even fitting to ask other questions of this type in the field of culture. While it is evident that there have been many distinguished female museologists, the role and achievements of women in the development of museology in Poland deserve more attention.

In times of the growing importance and influence of museums, numerous insights pointing to earlier perspectives on women's activities still resonate. When analysing the goals and evolution of collecting and museology in Poland, one can find the unique contribution of women in the biographies, actions and concepts of many of them. If we follow L. Nochlin's narrative, it is essential to recall such personalities as Izabella Czartoryska née Fleming, Izabella Działyńska née Czartoryska, Róża Raczyńska, and Magdalena Morska née Dzieduszycka. Equally important are the biographies and achievements of many other women who over the years have built art collections, cared for them, created and managed museums in all fields of their operation, including: archaeology, conservation, safeguarding, storing, making available, exhibiting, curating, popularizing and educating. To date, however, their activities have been insufficiently recognized by history, art and culture. It is therefore appropriate to reflect on the herstory of museology in Poland.

What is important is that women face up to the reality of their history and of their present situation, without making excuses of puffing mediocrity – Linda Nochlin.

In 2022, when Gerdien Verschoor's book on Rembrandt's Girl and Scholar was released in its Polish version as *Dziewczyna i uczony. Historia dwóch Rembrandtów z kolekcji Karoliny Lanckorońskiej* (The Girl and the Scholar. The story of two Rembrandts from the collection of Karolina Lanckorońska), and Anton Gil's *Peggy Guggenheim. The Life of an Art Addict*, I noted that both these extraordinary women were born in August 1898. Analysing their biographies and achievements, both of which are based on a fascination with art and a love of creativity, yet both of whom are so different for many reasons, I decided to share with you the need to build a narrative in culture from a woman's point of view.

The aim of the interdisciplinary academic conference is to create a platform for the exchange of research, thoughts and concepts on the herstory of Polish museology, taking into account a variety of perspectives and all areas of competence, regardless of the nature of the collections amassed. For discussion we propose, among other things: the following areas of research:

- biographies and experiences of women museum workers;
- achievements of women in various fields of museology;

- female scholars and their insights into the creation and maintenance of museums, museology, and the museums themselves;
- feminist perspectives on the creation and maintenance of museums;
- women’s narratives and interpretations.

We look forward to receiving presentations covering various academic disciplines, drawing on a wide range of paradigms and methodological concepts. The presentations of the scholars will be supplemented by a session with talks by female and male students and postgraduate students, who are also encouraged to participate in the conference.

We are planning to publish a post-conference publication.

You are invited to send your applications **by 15 May 2024** to: muzealniczki@lazienki-krolewskie.pl

Please include your: name and surname, affiliation, title of the paper, abstract (maximum 1,500 characters and spaces), telephone number and e-mail address. We will draw up a list of speakers by 30 June 2024. An agenda and organizational information will be sent out by e-mail.

There is no conference fee. The conference languages are Polish and English. Submissions will not be accepted without confirmation of your acceptance of the GDPR clause – see link below.

On inviting you to participate in the conference, we would like to remind you of the quotation from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, inscribed on the key to Izabella Czartoryska’s Gothic House in Puławy: ‘A woman (was) the leader of the deed’. This sentence is also a fragment of the title of the book by Prof. Dr Hab. Teresa Grzybkowska *Kobieta wodzem chwalebneho czynu. Twórczynie pierwszych polskich muzeów i ogrodów filozoficznych* (which translates as A woman is the leader of a glorious deed. Creators of the first Polish museums and philosophical gardens), published in 2018.

Welcome to the Royal Łazienki Museum

Dr Marianna Otmianowska
in collaboration with Joanna Gregier, Anita Kacprzyk, Malwina Rozwadowska and Kamilla Pereta

The event is being held under the patronage of ICOM Polska.

Honorary committee of the conference:

Dr Grażyna Bastek
Dr Izabela Bukalska
Prof. Dr Hab. Anna Sylwia Czyż
Dr Maria Gołąb
Barbara Gołębiowska
Jolanta Gumula
Dr Katarzyna Jagodzińska
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