

# The Art and Gender – A Gender Perspective Analysis

## The 2022 Calendar – *Comorile Muzeului*

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**ABSTRACT:** The author started this research based on an article published in *The Guardian* titled “Mind-blowing: Why do men’s paintings cost 10 times more than women’s?” Shocking: Why do artists’ paintings cost 10 times more than those painted by women painters? Being a feminist and interested in equal opportunities between women and men, the author looks at everything around through a gender lens. The general theme is meritocracy. As a colleague of the author used to say: I don't care if the person applying for a job is a woman or a man, but be the best. If only it were that simple! In the artistic field, as in many other fields, the value is given by the price of the product, in our case, of works of art. As we shall see, not by a long shot.

**KEYWORDS:** men’s paintings, women painters, gender equality, equality of opportunity

### **Introduction**

The writer Mary Ann Sieghart was the first to point out that in the UK, for every pound a male artist earned, a woman's work was worth 10p - and when she signed it, the value of the work dropped even further. She thought, according to this reality, is a man's painting level ten times that of a woman? The famous German artist Georg Baselitz said (Clark 2013): “Women can’t paint well. It’s a fact. The market doesn’t lie.” If we only evaluate artistic talent from the perspective of the market, we can conclude that male artists are ten times better than female artists. But is the market valuation strictly objective? Does it only consider the artistic value of this painting, or is there another reason?

### **The Art and Gender**

The most expensive painting ever made is Leonardo da Vinci’s *Salvator Mundi*, which sold for \$450 million, while the world record for female artist Georgia O’Keeffe is \$44.4 million, just one-tenth. According to the author, works by women were pulled from the gallery after announcing their pregnancy. This action was taken because art curators considered they could not devote themselves as fully to their art career as they had previously, and investing in painting was considered risky.

Sieghart feels that this judgment is unfair. In this field also, as in most of human history, women have not been allowed to practice art in the same way as men, so inevitably fewer female artists than male artists are recognized as masters. Among living artists, Jeff Koons holds the \$91 million record, while Jenny Saville's female record is just \$12.5 million. Even down in the hierarchy, the spread is still 10:1.

Sieghart presents the findings of Helen Gorrill, author of *Women Can't Paint*, who examined the prices of 5,000 paintings sold worldwide and found that for every pound earned by a male artist, a woman artist earns only 10 pence. Gorrill found the finding truly shocking, given that women have long made-up 70 percent of merit-based art schools and an art world that prides itself on its liberal, progressive values. She also found that while the value of works signed by men increased, the value of works signed by women decreased.

To examine art lovers’ perceptions of the quality of paintings, Mary Ann Sieghart presents research by Oxford University finance professor Renée Adams (2021), which

conducted a study on how to appreciate a painting. She showed study participants the work of five men and five women and asked them to identify the gender of the artist. These guessed right 50% of the time. Renée Adams concluded that this is pretty good evidence that men's art is no different from, and therefore not superior to, women's art. In the second part of the study, she showed male art connoisseurs and investors a painting created by the AI and randomly assigned either an artist's name or a female artist's name. They said they liked the painting more when they thought it was done by a man than when they were told it was done by a woman.

Francis Morris, director of Tate Modern, explained this result as an unintended collision between the market, art history and institutions. The need for validation becomes a convention for those interested in investing in the arts, which intersects with a patriarchal society. He cites the example of EH Gombrich's world-bestselling art book, *The Art Story*, which is must-read for art students. Only one artist is featured on 688 pages. How did this happen? Why?

Noting the differences between male and female artists, he also pointed out the number of art collections by male and female artists in museums. Once an artist is acquired by a museum, the value of their work increases. The same happens when they receive temporary exhibitions. As in other fields, female artists face serious discrimination as they are thrown out of galleries immediately after announcing their pregnancy. The reason given was that they were no longer considered to be fully devoted to their art and career, and investing in their work was considered risky.

It was also noted that women and men use different criteria when evaluating artwork for purchase. Men pay more attention to the artist and their background, while women pay more attention to the artwork. Such representation-based assessments can be a barrier for underrepresented people to enter the art world, Elsesser (2022) also noted for Forbes magazine.

Gender-focused pay disparities have also been identified by research from the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent federal agency in the United States that is the nation's largest funder of the arts and arts education. For example, female visual artists in the U.S. earn 0.85 cents for all dollar male artists earn, according to the study, even though women make up the majority of the field, accounting for 51 percent of all artists. The study found that women are significantly underrepresented in major arts institutions. The study, conducted by the Association of Art Museum Directors and the National Center for the Study of the Arts, among 200 museums across the United States, was published in 2017. The study also highlights the fact that women in leadership positions earn 75% of their male counterparts.

However, both Mary Ann Sieghart and Kim Elsesser believe the field is changing as museums and art collectors become more interested in and support women's art.

According to a BBC documentary, secondary market prices for works by female artists rose 29 percent faster than those for male art, despite lower starting prices. Meanwhile, the representation of women in exhibitions and collecting has increased, according to a survey by Art Basel and UBS. They observed a gradual increase in the share of collections made by women, from 40% in 2021 to 39% in 2020, 37% in 2019 and 33% in 2018.

According to Nuria Madrenas (Elsesser 2022), art tastes have also changed, from Baby Boomers and Generation X to Millennials who are more interested in buying art from their generation. They want to buy as much art as possible from up-and-coming artists. They do not care about blue chip art because of the huge variance.

### **“Treasures of the Museum” calendar produced by the National Museum of Art of Romania from the Alias Calendar Collection – Analysis**

With this optimism in mind, the calendar I purchased for 2022, a “Museum Treasure” from the Alias Calendars series produced by the National Museum of Art of Romania, caught my attention. Through quantitative and qualitative research, I became interested in the representation of women

in this calendar, including the number of female artists in the work, the models for the artwork, and the attitudes expressed by the painters. The calendar consists of 13 paintings including the cover, a selection of 7 portraits of women and 5 portraits of men, including a portrait of Ion Luchian also on cover 1.

Portraits of men are: a man with a goose (Fig. no. 2), a man with a revolver (Fig. no. 5), a man with folded hands (Fig. no.6), a man with a paintbrush in his hand (Fig.no.7), going to or coming back from nature with an easel behind him (Fig. no. 3). As we can see, all the portraits have subjects to express something about them, they are in motion, in activity. The man with geese symbolizes the commerce; that with his revolver means defending a site, or a person, or engaging in combat; the painter at work, another on his way to or from a painting session, is producing art. Including the portrait of a man who embraces himself, has an assertive air, a fortitude, and self-confidence. He seemed willing to argue his case during a debate.

Analyzing these seven female subjects, we noticed that four of them were image staring straight at them while the artist was painting (Fig. no. 1, Fig. no. 4, Fig. no. 11, Fig. no. 12), and one stared at the orange in her hand (Fig. no. 12), a meal, women and girls are often related to food; among them a subject is depicted with a hand on his hip (Fig.no.9), in a way that suggests movement, while the revolutionary Ana Ipatescu (Fig.no.10) is depicted holding a revolver in her hand as she moves. I even think that the portraits of architect Delavrancea Gibory (Fig. no. 11), even if static, have an open, direct, decisive gaze. Of the seven models, one is in motion, another captures her direct and confident nature, and the rest are static with innocent poses and sad expressions.

From a gender perspective, the calendar's subjects are arguably balanced. There are 50% images of female models and the same number of images of male models. The difference is found when analyzing those who make art, the painters. No works by women painters were included in the calendar. All the paintings are by male painters. We meet Nicolae Grigorescu (1838-1907), Ștefan Luchian (1868-1916), Ion Andreescu (1850-1882), Alexandru Ciucureanu (1903-1977), Eustașiu Stoenescu (1884-1957), Nicolae Tonitza (1886-1940) and Anton Chadek (1794-1882), Czech Artists. I do not see any specific theme or intent in the calendar's content that had the theme in mind for the calendar maker. Plus, I do not even know if the museum owns the female artist's work. I used the red line of this calendar as a portrait.

By doing a simple search in the virtual space, I found an article from Civilization Magazine titled "*An incursion of Romanian Fine Art: Women Painters in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*", which, as the title suggests, describes the work done by female artists to consolidate Romanian culture, namely: Rodica Maniu Mütznier (1892-1958), Micaela Eleutheriade (1900-1982), Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck (1879-1969), Nina Arbore (1889-1942), Nadia Grossman Bulighin (born 1891-1930), Eugenia Filotti Atanasiu (1880-1968).

## Conclusion

This research shows that international resolutions and guidelines on equal pay in all areas of life, including the arts, are relevant. We were able to show that the valuation of a woman's work is often not related to her worth but to social norms, and underestimation is representative of a patriarchal society. I have also found that motherhood in art is often a reason why work is undervalued, as men's and women's art is valued differently when it comes to buying. However, times and tastes are changing with the generational shift towards millennials and more women entering the market. Admittedly, before this field also achieves gender balance, certain positive steps will need to be taken to encourage female participation and investment in art produced by women, such as creating virtual galleries (the online Art Gallery and consultancy TACIT) dedicated to artists for women at lower prices.

## Methods

This article used a different method. The method of analysis, called “documentary analysis,” is not very clear. In this study, the type of data used for documentary analysis is not just paper stuff because we are currently analyzing things people create online.

Nor are we limited to words, we also include images in our analysis, as sometimes images are used to suggest something so offensive that they cannot be ‘said out loud’ (Stuart Hall talks about this). Examples of documents are pictures like paintings, but also advertisements on the side of buses (and anywhere else), packaging for products we use and buy, passports, meeting minutes, letters, diaries, and anything else with text or pictures thing. I must admit that the structure presented here allows for more hierarchies to be added, if necessary, to extend the research on this topic. We consider this flexible structure to be particularly important, as further developments and methodical shifts in focus are inevitable over time.

“Historical research” is the method of gathering data and information used alongside and combined with the study of documents and the form of the study question is: How? Why? We chose these strategies because they are the most revealing of cultural characteristics.

The “comparative method” was used as a basis for analyzing equality of opportunity in art and painting, applied to the most important works over the centuries. To answer the question, compare society’s value to women’s and men’s paintings, why?

Subsequently, the theoretical material is summarized by means of analysis and synthesis, and conclusions are drawn accordingly. Statistical and sociological methods allow to analyze the consequences of the current socioeconomic situation and also to estimate some of the trends we have identified in the concluding chapter.

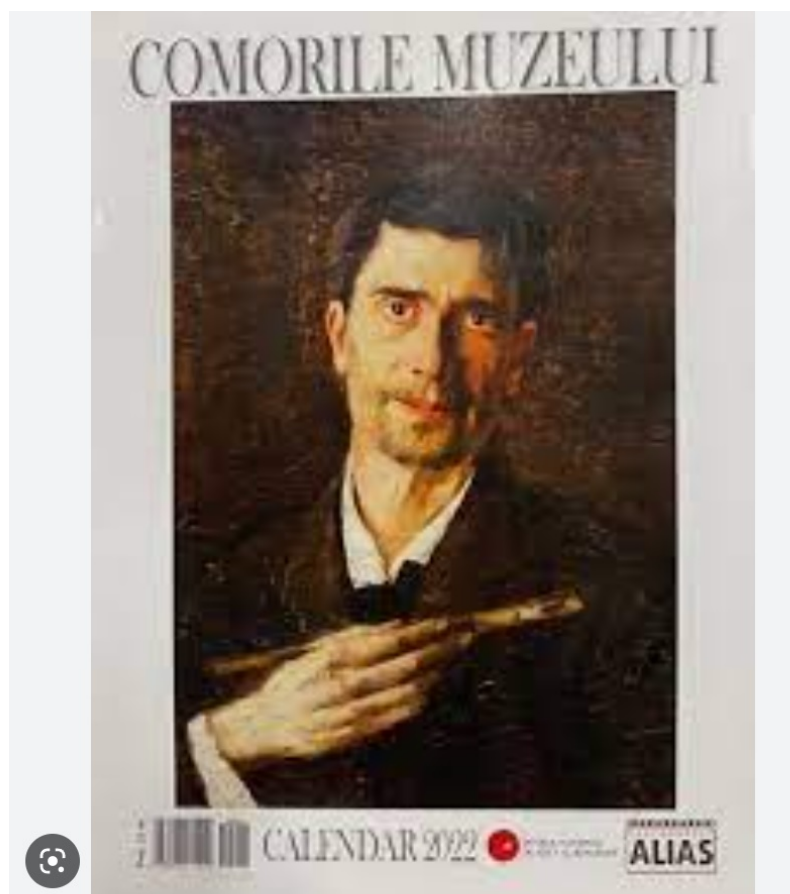


Fig.no.0.2022\_Calendar\_Cover  
The 2022 Calendar – *Comorile Muzeului*



Anton Chladek - Alexandrina G. Manu  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 1. Anton Chadek - Alexandrina G. Manu



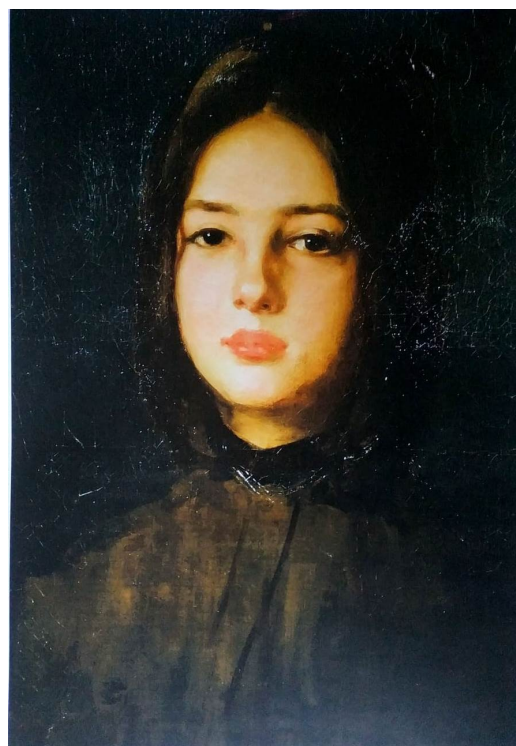
Nicolae Grigorescu - Evreul cu gâsca  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 2. Nicolae Grigorescu - Evreul cu gâsca



Nicolae Grigorescu - Andreescu la Barbizon  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 3. Nicolae Grigorescu - Andreescu la Barbizon



Nicolae Grigorescu - Maria Nacu  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 4. Nicolae Grigorescu - Maria Nacu



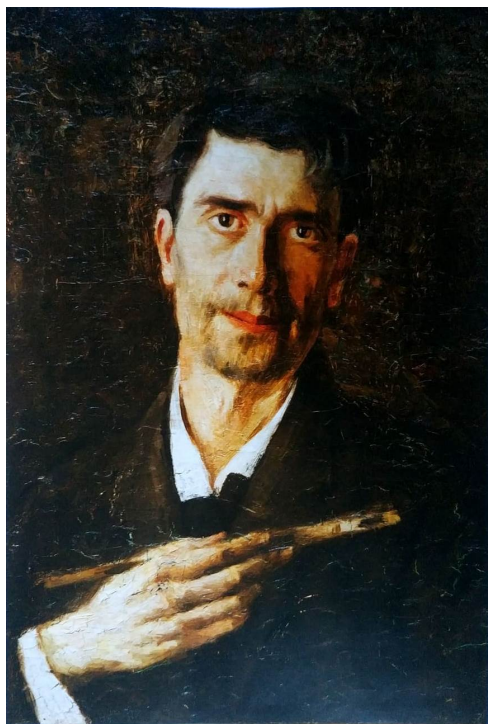
Nicolae Grigorescu - Paznicul de la Chailly  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 5. Nicolae Grigorescu - Paznicul de la Chailly



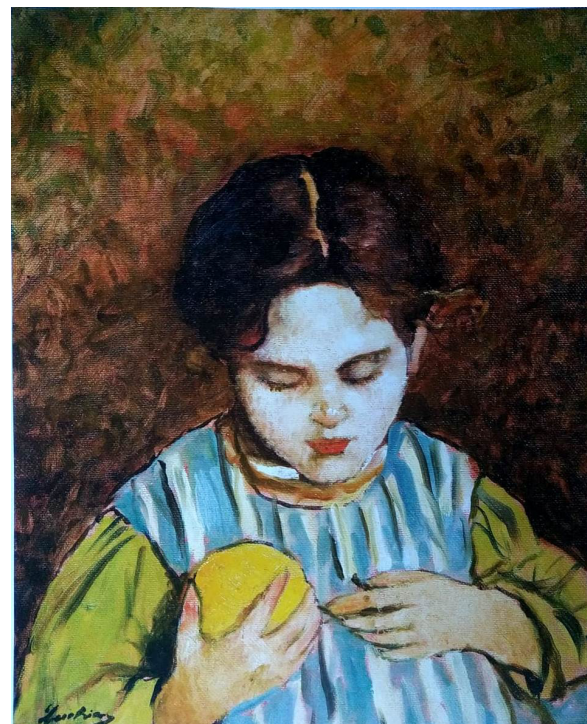
Ion Andreescu - Autoportret  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 6. Ion Andreescu - Autoportret



Ștefan Luchian - Un zugrav (Autoportret)  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 7. Ștefan Luchian - Un zugrav (autoportret)



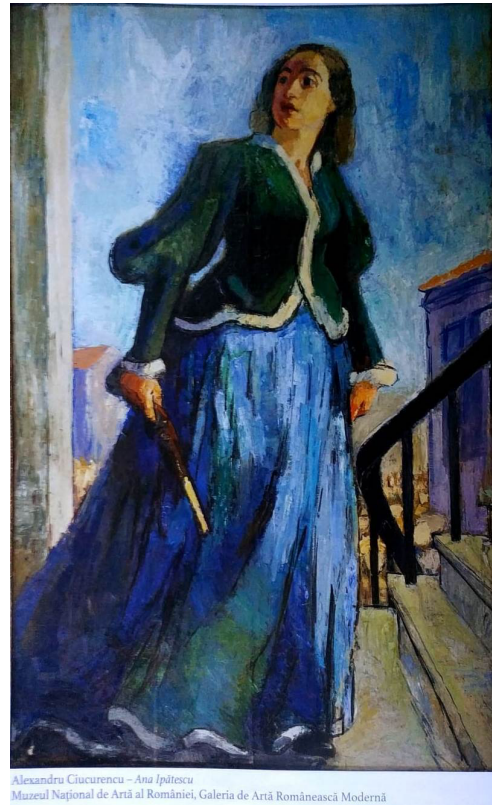
Ștefan Luchian - Lica cu portocala  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 8. Ștefan Luchian - Lica cu portocala



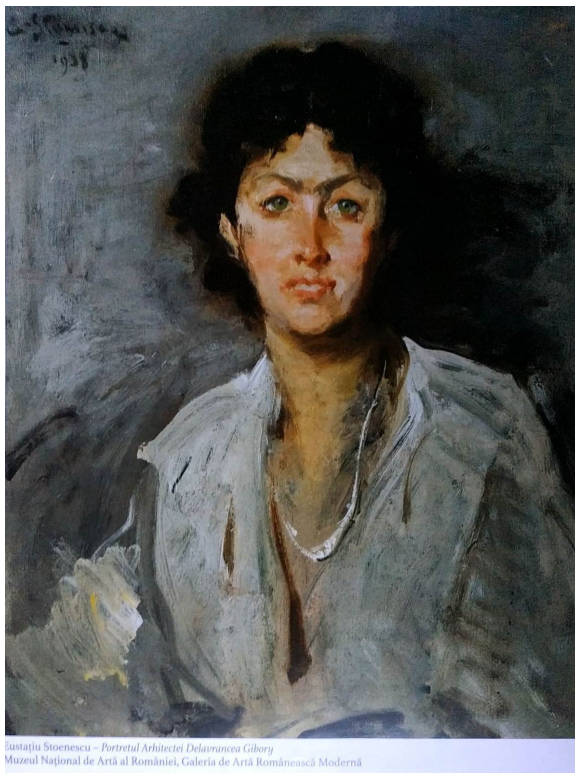
Ștefan Luchian - Safta Florăreasa  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 9. Ștefan Luchian - Safta Florăreasa



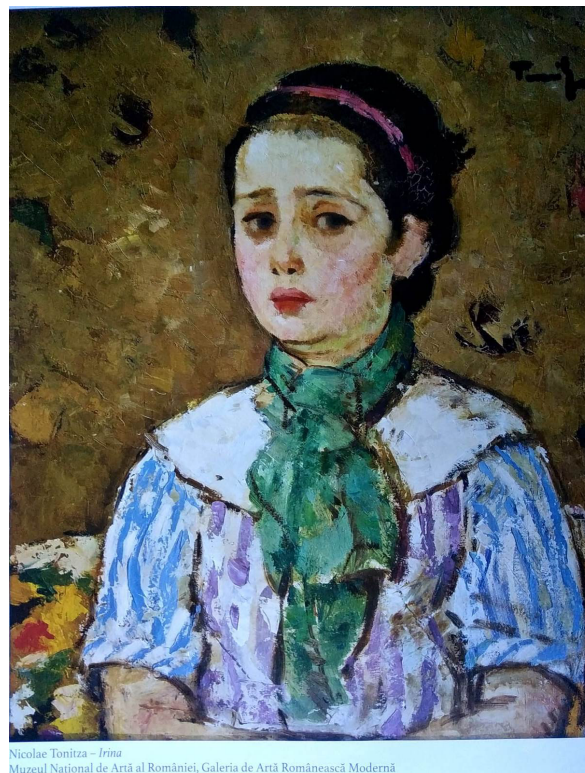
Alexandru Ciucureanu - Ana Ipătescu  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 10. Alexandru Ciucureanu - Ana Ipătescu



Eustațiu Stoenescu - Portretul Arhitectei Delavrancea Gibory  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 11. Eustațiu Stoenescu - Portretul Arhitectei Delavrancea Gibory



Nicolae Tonitza - Irina  
Muzeul Național de Artă al României, Galeria de Artă Românească Modernă

Fig. no. 12. Nicolae Tonitza - Irina

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