

# Women in the museum: gender inequality in art



Name:

Date:




## Introduction

In this worksheet, you will look at the inequalities between men and women in art.

"Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?"

Source: [Tate](#).

Author: Guerrilla Girls

 **Have you ever heard of the Guerilla Girls? Describe your first thoughts about this quote.**

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## Note for the teacher

For a more vivid introduction, it would be useful to show a picture of the poster of the Guerrilla Girls or to get the learners to research the poster themselves as part of the following tasks.

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## Describe the poster of the “Guerrilla Girls”.

The poster of the Guerrilla Girls is designed to be eye-catching. The central question of the poster is: 'Do women have to be naked to get into Boston museums?' This question is written in large, black letters and stands out clearly against the yellow background. Below the question, there is a statement in text that highlights the fact that although many of the nudes in the Museum of Fine Arts are female, only 11% of the artists are women. The poster uses contrasting colors. To the left of the text, there is an image of a naked female body with a guerrilla mask.

## Explain the message to be conveyed by the poster.

The message of the poster is to highlight the gender inequality present in art museums. It questions whether women have to be depicted as naked to be included in museum collections, pointing out the disparity between the high number of female nudes and the low percentage of female artists. The Guerrilla Girls aim to address and bring attention to issues of sexism and racism in the art world through this provocative and visually striking poster.

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 Find out more about the “Guerrilla Girls” in this video.



## Youtube: In Focus: Guerrilla Girls

To watch the youtube video just scan the QR code.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZ6TjbjVr3I>

 Mark the correct answer with a cross.

**What was the primary reason the Guerrilla Girls began their activism in the art world?**

- They wanted to promote abstract art.
- They noticed that nearly all opportunities were going to white men.
- They aimed to reduce the prices of artworks.

**How did the Guerrilla Girls aim to make their message more impactful?**

- By creating large sculptures.  By organizing art auctions.
- By using provocative headlines, humor, and statistics.

**What was the immediate public reaction when the Guerrilla Girls started putting up their posters?**

- People ignored the posters.  People tore down the posters.
- People wanted to talk to them.

**According to the Guerrilla Girls, what has art become an instrument of?**

- Environmental activism.  Capitalism and investment.  Public education.

**Why do the Guerrilla Girls believe museums are changing their ways?**

- Museums are focusing solely on modern art.  Museums are reducing entry fees.
- Museums are starting to show more women and artists of color.

**What criticism do the Guerrilla Girls have about the current practices of showing more diverse artists?**

- Artists are not being compensated fairly.
- The same artists are shown repeatedly instead of a broader history.
- Only abstract art is being featured.

**What is the Guerrilla Girls' perspective on the authority of museums today?**

- Museums should only display classical art.
- People don't have to accept everything in a museum.
- Museums are the ultimate authority on art.

**What did the Guerrilla Girls say about the need for the National Museum of Women in the Arts?**

- They should only feature contemporary art.  They are unnecessary in today's world.
- Until we don't need them, we need them.

**What is the Guerrilla Girls' view on the diversity of culture?**

- Only traditional art forms should be valued.  We have an amazing creative diverse culture.
- Culture should be homogeneous.

**What advice do the Guerrilla Girls give about approaching art?**

- Avoid questioning the art displayed in museums.  Only appreciate art from famous artists.
- Be critical of the system but open to the art.

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## The Gender Pay Gap and the Representation of Female Artists in Art


The representation of female artists in the art world is significantly influenced by the Gender Pay Gap. This term describes the disparity in earnings between male and female artists, which is a critical factor in the unequal opportunities and recognition they receive. Despite the growing number of women entering artistic professions, their financial compensation often falls short compared to their male counterparts, affecting their ability to invest in their careers and gain visibility.

The art market reflects this disparity, as works by male artists tend to fetch higher prices and receive more attention from collectors and galleries. This financial inequality is rooted in long-standing systemic biases that undervalue women's contributions and perpetuate male-dominated networks within the industry. As a result, female artists face challenges in achieving the same level of exposure and acclaim as men, limiting their professional growth and market presence.

The consequences of the Gender Pay Gap are profound; lower earnings mean less capital to fund exhibitions, materials, and promotional activities, further marginalizing female artists. This cycle of economic disadvantage reinforces their underrepresentation and hinders their ability to establish themselves within the art community. Thus, the Gender Pay Gap remains a critical barrier to achieving equal recognition and success for female artists in the art world.

 **Explain how the causes in the text lead to inequalities between men and women in art.**

The text highlights the Gender Pay Gap as a significant factor leading to inequalities between men and women in art. Female artists earn less than their male counterparts, which limits their ability to invest in their careers. This financial inequality prevents them from funding exhibitions, purchasing materials, and promoting their work, ultimately reducing their visibility and recognition in the art world. The systemic biases and male-dominated networks further exacerbate these disparities, making it difficult for female artists to achieve the same level of exposure and acclaim as men.

 **Can you think of any other reasons for the inequalities between men and women in art? Write down your thoughts.**

Beyond the Gender Pay Gap, other reasons for inequalities between men and women in art may include historical biases that have traditionally favored male artists, institutional barriers that limit women's access to resources and opportunities, and societal stereotypes that undervalue women's contributions. Additionally, the lack of female representation in influential positions within the art industry can perpetuate these disparities and hinder efforts to achieve gender equality in the art world.

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📌 The Guerilla Girls published their work in 1989. Is it different today?

📌 Research how many women are exhibiting in famous museums today, such as the Tate Museum in London or the Louvre in Paris.

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📌 What could your own artistic work look like that addresses the problem? Use the free space to collect ideas in a mind map.