



By Mary Gregory February 14, 2020

LI Museums Give Women Artists A Brush With Fame



Women artists, such as the ones who founded the A.I.R. Gallery in 1974, are being celebrated at museums across Long Island. Credit: Stony Brook University, A.I.R. Gallery/David Attie

The centennial of the 19th amendment that gave American women the right to vote is being commemorated nationwide by organizations and initiatives, and also by museums, which are celebrating the work of women artists.

The numbers can be disheartening for women in the arts. According to a 2019 study done by [Artnet News](#), nearly half the professional visual artists in the country are female, but only 11% of art purchased by museums last year was made by women. Another study last year by the [Public Library of Science](#) notes that more than 80% of the work on museum walls is by male artists.

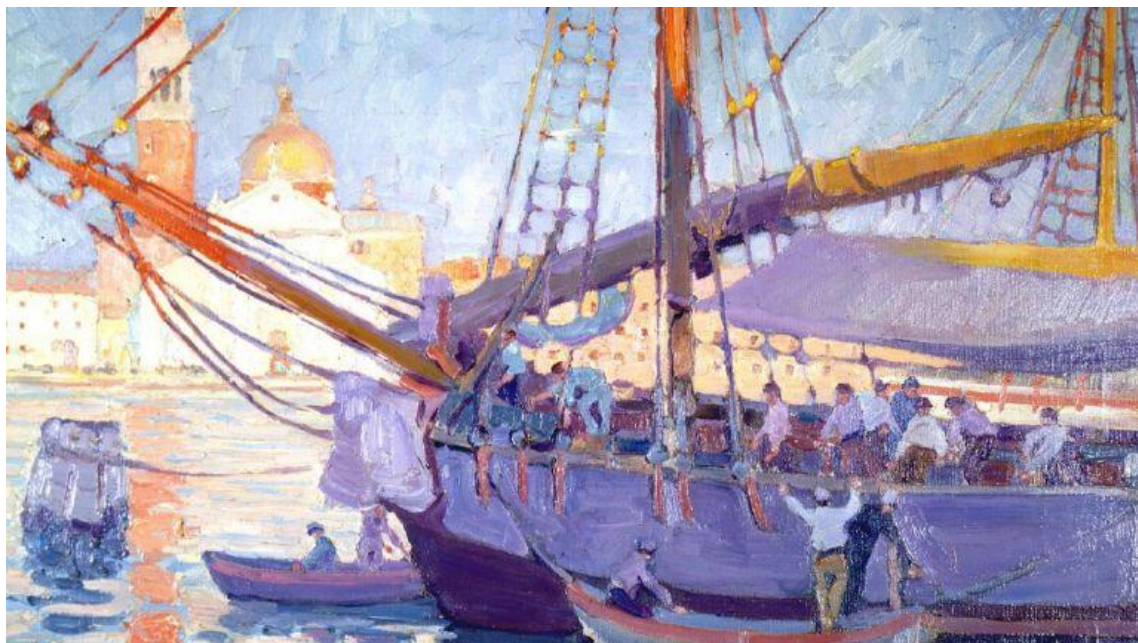
On Long Island, that's about to change. From the Islip Art Museum's exhibition "I Am at IAM," which runs through March 28, to the Nassau County Museum of Art's summer show, "Heroines of American Art: From Abstract Expressionism to Now," local institutions are stepping up to exhibit, discuss and spotlight artwork by women past and present. Many events are timed for March, Women's History Month; all are about increasing visibility and altering perceptions.

GETTING RECOGNITION

For Karen Levitov, director of Stony Brook University's Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, inclusivity is a priority. "All the solo shows I've presented have featured women," she says. "I hope that becomes more and more normal, and that eventually things will just even out, without there being an effort on the part of curators." In the gallery's current exhibition, "Artists as Innovators," more than half the works are by women and it features prominent contemporary artists including the feminist collective, The Guerrilla Girls. On Tuesday, Cuban-American performance artist Carmelita Tropicana humorously skewers the concept of "a woman's place." March 9 brings a film and talk with artist Howardena Pindell about the all-female cooperative, A.I.R. Gallery. In the 1970s, when she and other women artists wanted to exhibit, no New York City galleries opened their doors, so they launched their own. It's still operating.

Pindell, who's received major recognition since, is also included in Hofstra University's "Nevertheless She Persisted," which focuses on women artists since the 1800s. Says curator Kristen Rudy, "It's not a political exhibition. It's about the idea of women's persistence and their fight for equal rights and equal recognition."

Some, like Mabel Dwight and Dorothy Dehner never achieved fame, but had long, impactful careers. "These women artists didn't have as much recognition, but they kept working. That's the idea," adds museum director, Karen Albert.



Jane Peterson's "The Lagoon, Venice" (1920), an oil on canvas, is on view at Hofstra University.
Credit: Hofstra University Museum of Art

<https://www.newsday.com/entertainment/long-island/museums/women-artists-1.41746326>