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## **Why Have There Been No Great Female Artists?**

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In the article titled 'Why Have There Been No Great Female Artists?' authored by renowned American art historian Linda Nochlin, the focus squarely rests on the history and theory of feminist art. Nochlin opens her discourse by boldly asserting her intent to adopt a distinct feminist perspective, setting it apart from contemporary feminist movements. Her argument gains momentum through a potent blend of emotional appeal and historical scrutiny.

Nochlin initiates her discussion by shedding light on several significant challenges confronting women in contemporary society. She contends that rather than passing judgment on women, it is imperative to examine the historical lens through which female artists have been viewed in the art industry (Nochlin and Linda 54). The author delves into the quasi-religious origins of artists, particularly up to the 19th century.



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The article underscores the prevalence of women artists who have experienced rags-to-riches journeys, surmounting formidable odds (Nochlin and Linda 43). Nochlin also dissects the conventional roles assigned to women in society, particularly within aristocratic circles. She argues that societal expectations imposed on women hardly afford them the time to cultivate their artistic talents.

Challenging the notion that female artists are inherently different from their male counterparts, Nochlin deems this idea outdated, pointing to the abundance of accomplished women in various creative fields such as art, music, and literature, with literary luminaries like Sylvia Plath exemplifying the prowess of women in the realm of writing (Parker, Rozsika, and Griselda 98). Such examples establish a compelling equivalence between female and male artists in their respective eras.

Nochlin posits that the absence of great female artists can be attributed to the dearth of opportunities for women within the art industry. She refutes any distinction between art and other professions in terms of the prerequisites and training required, emphasizing that art institutions have historically exhibited gender bias, favoring men over women. The historical imbalance is evident in the overwhelming male dominance in the ranks of emerging artists, underpinned by the historical restriction of art training to men. Notably, art schools exclusively admitted male students, while only male members of the family could pursue artistic training. Wealthy women from privileged backgrounds were the sole exception, but they could only explore art as a leisure pursuit, never as a viable career path.

Linda Nochlin asserts that it is these limitations in training opportunities that have prevented the emergence of great female artists. In the past, female artists were denied access to the language of art and its evolution. However, contemporary advancements in technology have democratized the art landscape, allowing anyone to pursue an artistic vocation, resulting in the rise of numerous accomplished



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female artists. To fully comprehend feminist art, one must grasp its historical underpinnings and the context in which it was conceived.

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