

# WOMEN IN THE ARTS



## 4. HER MAJESTY'S COMMAND

October 14, 2024

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**SIXTEEN POWERFUL WOMEN:** Empresses, Queens, Archduchesses, consorts and mistresses of Kings; their names are given in **bold** in the texts below. All frequently appear on lists of great patrons of the arts, but the nature of their patronage differs. All engaged artists to make their portraits. Many have had buildings built to their requirements. A few have worked directly with other kinds of artist to create new work, though more have been the figurehead to whom such works were dedicated. Several built up impressive collections of existing art. All of them played a role in history and led fascinating personal lives into the bargain, but our purpose has less to do with biography than the motives for patronage. And, above all, to sample some of the great works by both women and men created in their name. *rb.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Looking back on last week's class, as a reminder that the employment of women as artists so often depends on women as patrons.

♪ **Francesca Caccini:** *La liberazione di Ruggiero* (1625), opening

## B. THE QUEEN BUILDS

Six buildings created for queens: Pharoah **Hatshepsut** (2nd millennium BCE), **Roxelana** of Turkey (1508–58), **Anne of Denmark** (1574–1619), **Catherine the Great** (1729–96), **Marie Antoinette** (1755–93), and **Queen Victoria** (1819–1901).

♪ **Video:** *Lost Queens* (with Joann Fletcher), section on Hatshepsut  
**Haseki Sultan complex**, Istanbul

**Titian:** *La Sultana Rossa* (c.1550, Sarasota)

**Inigo Jones:** The Queen's House, Greenwich (begun 1616)

♪ **Robert Johnson:** *The Fairy Masque* (1611)

**Cameron:** Gallery at Tsarskoye Selo

**Mique:** *Hameau de la Reine*, Versailles

**Winterhalter:** Queen Victoria and Her Family (1846, Royal Coll.)

**Royal Albert Hall,** opened 1871

♪ **Sullivan:** *On Shore and Sea*, final chorus

## C. THE QUEEN'S PORTRAIT

The Portrait as Rehabilitation: the Byzantine **Empress Theodora** (497–548) and **Dowager Empress Cixi** of China (1835–1908). The Portrait as Ideal: **Isabella d'Este** (1474–1539) and **Queen Victoria**. The Portrait as Narrative: , **Marie Antoinette** and **Marie de' Medici** (1575–1642).

**San Vitale, Ravenna:** mosaic of Empress Theodora (c.540)

**Katharine A. Carl:** *Dowager Empress Cixi* (1904, Smithsonian)

**Titian:** *Isabella in Black* (1536, Vienna)

**Mantegna:** *Madonna della Vittoria* (1496, Paris Louvre)

**Heinrich von Angeli;** *Queen Victoria* (1899)

**Vigée Lebrun:** *Portraits of Marie Antoinette* (1783 and 1787)

**David:** *Marie Antoinette on her Way to the Guillotine* (1793, Louvre)

**Rubens:** *Marie de' Medici* (1622, Prado)

♪ **Rubens:** *Marie de' Medici cycle* (1622, Louvre, with Lully music)

## D. TWO MORE BRITISH QUEENS

The Queen as figurehead and aegis. **Elizabeth I** (1533–1603) in regard to Shakespeare and others; **Queen Anne** (1665–1714) and Handel.

♪ **Film,** *Shakespeare in Love* (1998): Judi Dench as Elizabeth I

**Aemilia Lanyer:** *To The Queenes Most Excellent Majestie* (poem)

♪ **Handel:** *Ode on the Birthday of Queen Anne* (1713), opening

## E. IN THE KING'S BED

So long as her tenure lasted, the *maitresse en titre* of the King at Versailles had unlimited spending power, and thus the ability to wield patronage. **Mme. de Montespan** (1640–1707), the mistress of Louis XIV, employed a remarkable composer. **Mme. de Pompadour** (1721–64), mistress of Louis XV, an artist herself, supported numerous others.

♪ **Film,** *Versailles* (2016): Mme de Montespan and the Queen

**François de Troy:** *Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre*

♪ **Jacquet de la Guerre:** *Céphale et Procris* (1794), two scenes

**La Tour:** *Mme. de Pompadour* (1755, Louvre)

**Nattier:** *Mme. de Pompadour as Diana* (Versailles)

**Boucher:** *Mme. de Pompadour* (1756, Munich)

## F. THE GREAT COLLECTOR

We return briefly to **Catherine the Great** (1729–96), emphasizing her role as collector of art and magnet for artists and thinkers from all over Europe. We close with the music and painting of two women, one Russian, one French, who both worked at her court.

♪ **Video:** a visit to Tsarskoye Selo

**Cameron:** designs for Tsarskoye Selo

♪ **Kourakina:** "Je vais donc quitter," with Vigée Lebrun portraits

Heinrich von **Angeli** (1840–1925, *Austrian painter*), François **Boucher** (1703–70, *French painter*), Francesca **Caccini** (1587–1641, *Italian composer*), Charles **Cameron** (1745–1812, *Scottish architect*), Katharine A. **Carl** (1865–1938, *American painter*), Jacques-Louis **David** (1748–1825, *French painter*), George Frideric **Handel** (1685–79, *German composer*), Élisabeth **Jacquet de la Guerre** (1665–1729, *French composer*), Robert **Johnson** (1583–1633, *English composer*), Inigo **Jones** (1573–1652, *English architect*), Natalia Ivanovna **Kourakina** (1766–1831, *Russian composer*), Aemilia **Lanyer** (1569–1645, *English poet*), Quentin de **la Tour** (1704–88, *French painter*), **Leonardo** da Vinci (1452–1519, *Italian painter*), Andrea **Mantegna** (1431–1506, *Italian painter*), Richard **Mique** (1728–94, *French architect*), Jean-Marc **Nattier** (1685–1766, *French painter*), Jean-Baptiste **Pigalle** (1714–85, *French sculptor*), Peter Paul **Rubens** (1577–1640, *Flemish painter*), Arthur **Sullivan** (1842–1900, *English composer*), **Titian** (Tiziano Vecellio, 1485–1676, *Italian painter*), François de **Troy** (1645–1730, *French painter*), Élisabeth **Vigée Lebrun** (1755–1842, *French painter*), Franz Xaver **Winterhalter** (1805–73, *German painter*)