

# CLASS 10 : PATRONS AND COLLECTORS

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## TWELVE INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

### 1. Class title 1 (Stein, Gardner, Guggenheim)

We come now to a group of remarkable 20th-century American women who, though for the most part not artists themselves, have done more to advance the cause of the arts in America than any single painter, writer, or composer. I have made a short video to serve as a kind of menu.

### 2. Menu animation

### 3. Twelve influential women

I have grouped these figures into five main sections. **Baltimore to Paris** deals with four women who traveled from Baltimore to Paris, three before WW1 and the other just after it. **Music for Sharing** focuses on two women who supported composers, writers, and other creative artists in this country. **Visions of Venice** features two remarkable Americans who built up collections of sufficient size that their very homes have become world-famous museums; I'll take one before the break, and the other one after. **Painting Herself, Promoting Others** is about two women who themselves were modernist painters, but whose enduring contribution is their promotion of the work of others. And **Down to D.C.** brings it full-circle by featuring two women whose legacy is enshrined in two institutions in the Washington area that still thrive today.

### 4. Rebecca Clarke

The music you heard under the first part of that was a cello sonata by **Rebecca Clarke** (1886–1979), an English-born composer who moved to America, and whose career was supported in part by **Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge**; we'll hear more about her in a moment. She illustrates two problems I have had with the class in general. Although all the featured patrons are women, most of the artists they supported were men, and more of this patronage was in the field of the *visual* arts. I have to follow this on the whole to be true to their legacy; showing some painting by men is unavoidable. But so far as music or literature are concerned, I shall feature only the work of women.

## A. BALTIMORE TO PARIS

### 5. Section title A (Stein, the Cones, Beach, and JH Hospital)

It's really hard to synchronize old photos. **Gertrude Stein** (1874–1946) generally comes over as masculine and eccentric. Her friends, the sisters **Claribel Cone** (1864–1929) and **Etta Cone** (1870–1949) are usually seen as white-haired spinsters, but here the roles are reversed. The photo of Johns Hopkins

Hospital is significant, for Stein came here from California to study, but did not complete her degree. **Claribel** Cone trained here as a physician, and continued to work on the faculty of what was then the Womens' Medical College; she never practiced clinically. Her younger sister **Etta** was a pianist. The figure on the right, **Sylvia Beach** (1887–1962), is also a Baltimorean, though she spent her teens in Paris when her father, a Presbyterian minister, got an appointment there. I'll get back to her in a moment.

## 6. The Cone sisters with Gertrude Stein (center) in Italy

The Cone sisters were rather more established than Stein, and used to hold weekly *salons*, which Stein attended. They also took annual summer holidays in Europe, and when Stein moved to Paris in 1903, the Cones would visit. Apparently, they did not just stay in the city, but traveled together as well; this photo is taken in Italy.

## 7. Brenda Wineapple: *sisterbrother* cover, with the Steins' apartment

Whether this was a contributing factor or not, Gertrude Stein left Baltimore in 1902, following an unhappy love affair (her first) with **May Bookstaver**, a fellow student. She joined **her brother Leo** in London, and then moved with him to Paris, where he wanted to study painting. So far as I know, he had no success as an artist himself, but developed an acute eye. Almost immediately, the two began buying paintings by artists of more or less their own age; as Gertrude said, you could either buy paintings or clothes, but not both. Their first purchase was two **Renoirs**, two **Gauguins**, and **Cézanne's *Bathers***, all with a windfall of 4,000 francs. Soon their apartments, though relatively sparsely furnished, were covered in paintings from floor to ceiling.

## 8. Picasso: *Gertrude Stein* (1906, NY Met)

Leo's tastes were slightly more conservative than Gertrude. But she was developing her own form of modernism as a writer, and soon became friends with the leader of the *avant garde*, **Pablo Picasso** (1881–1973). He painted a portrait of her in 1906; she kept it to the end of her life, even when the rest of her collection was split up. At the time, he had still not crossed the line into Cubism, but she would remain a supporter when he did, and for many years beyond.

## 9. Picasso: *Fanny Tellier* (1910, NY Met), with Stein's "If I told him"

Indeed, she emulated Picasso. The slide shows one of his earliest Cubist portraits, *Fanny Tellier*, on the left, with the opening of her 1923 poem, *A Completed Portrait of Picasso*. It seems to be about Napoleon and after the title Picasso is not mentioned, but its manner, even its layout on the page, is clearly cubist. Let's hear her reading it, just the beginning.

## 10. Gertrude Stein reads *A Completed Portrait of Picasso*

As I said, the Steins continued to acquire art, which they funded in part by selling works already in their collection. So gradually it was dispersed. A 2011 exhibition in San Francisco attempted to reassemble as much of the collection as possible; I'll show you the beginning of the PBS Newshour report so that you can catch some of the range and color that must have flooded that apartment.

11. PBS Newshour: *The Steins Collect* (2011)

12. Matisse: *Purple Robe and Anemones* (1937, BMA Cone Collection)

The **Cone sisters** were different from the Steins in their collecting habits in two ways: they did not live in Europe, so everything had to be shipped home; and from quite an early date they seemed to have formed the idea of donating their collect intact to the Baltimore Museum. Theirs was also an eclectic collection, but its glory sprang from the particular connection between Etta Cone and **Henri Matisse** (1869–1954), who was almost her exact contemporary. This of course is not a portrait of Etta, but whoever took that photo surely had a sense of humor

13. Marlborough Apartments, Eutaw Street, Baltimore

Claribel and Etta had a virtually one floor of an entire wing in the Marlborough Apartment on Eutaw Street. All the same, their rooms looked very much like the Steins': sparsely furnished, pictures everywhere. They no longer exist, but a couple of sections have been reconstructed at the BMA, and the museum also commissioned a computer-generated virtual tour.

14. The Cones' apartments, visual tour

15. Matisse: *The Yellow Dress* (1929–32, Cone Collection)

I have been doing a lot of jumping around, so let me end by focusing on one picture, *The Yellow Dress*. This is the last of four short videos in which curator Jay Fisher talks about the picture; I'll put links to all four on the website.

16. Matisse: *The Yellow Dress*, Jay Fisher video

17. Shakespeare and Company, Paris

My fourth Paris Baltimorean is **Sylvia Beach**, who came to the city in 1917 to study French literature, and remained to become a fixture of its cultural landscape. She is best known, through her English-language bookshop Shakespeare and Company, as the publisher of **James Joyce's** *Ulysses*, but as this video should make clear, she made the shop a kind of *salon* that inspired and cross-fertilized most of the leading expatriate writers of the day.

18. Sylvia Beach on Shakespeare and Company

## B. MUSIC FOR SHARING

19. Section title B: Music for Sharing

**Marian MacDowell** (1857–1956) and **Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge** (1864–1953): both were pianists, both had money, and both had a considerable impact on the music and other arts in 20th-century America. Let's start with Coolidge. Instead of lecturing, I'm going to try to sum her up in a video, because I found a recording of a *String Quartet* that she wrote, and I want you to hear a snatch of it.

20. Coolidge: *String Quartet in E Minor*, excerpt

21. Premiere of *Appalachian Spring*

It is kind of amazing that a ballet performed on such a tiny stage—the Coolidge would barely hold an ensemble of a dozen players—should have become so iconic, but *Appalachian Spring* spoke to something in the American soul. However, since I am trying only to play works by women, my focus now is not on **Aaron Copland** (1900–90) so much as the “Martha” behind the ballet, **Martha Graham** (1894–199). And for that, we need to see it in color.

22. Graham/Copland: *Appalachian Spring*, excerpt

23. The MacDowell Colony

**Marian Nevins**, as she was back then, was the musical daughter of a Wall Street banker. At the age of 23, she went to Frankfurt, intending to study with **Clara Schumann**. But Clara was away, and she was directed instead to a young American expatriate, **Edward MacDowell**. In time, the student became the wife, and she devoted herself to promoting her husband’s career, not least by performing his works. In 1896, the couple bought a property in Peterborough, NH, as a summer retreat—something that was increasingly necessary as Edward succumbed to a crippling nervous disorder that ended his career. Shortly before his death in 1908, Marian secured his legacy by inviting other artists to their property to enable them to work undisturbed. Over more than a century, **The MacDowell Colony**—or simply MacDowell, as it’s now called—has provided residencies to over 8,000 artists from all disciplines. Listen.

24. Video: *Before is MacDowell*

25. Louise Talma and Meredith Monk

Composer **Louise Talma** (1906–96) probably holds the record for the most residencies at MacDowell: 41 over a span of 52 years, a favor that she repaid by a million-dollar bequest in her will. She was born of an American mother in France, and spent a lot of her time there up to 1939, shortly before her MacDowell residencies began. Here is a complete movement from a quartet called *The Ambient Air* (1983); the movement is called “Driving Rain.” I’ll follow it immediately with a short video about the woman you saw the most of back there, the composer/choreographer **Meredith Monk** (1942– ), who has benefitted from six residencies. This is a teaser for a celebration of her work at BAM.

26. Talma: *The Ambient Air*, second movement

27. The Dancing Voice of Meredith Monk

## C. VISIONS OF VENICE

28. Section title C: Gardner and Guggenheim

*Visions of Venice* is about two American heiresses who lived in Venetian palazzos. **Isabella Stewart Gardner** (1840–1924) had an imitation one built to her specifications in Boston to house her collection of old masters, which she turned into a museum for the public. **Peggy Guggenheim** (1898–1979) bought

a real one in Venice to house her collection of contemporary art, which she also opened to the public. I don't need to talk at length about either, because I have two videos to do it for me. We'll save Peggy until after the break, but here is the introductory video they show at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. It is a bit slow, but it covers the basics.

29. [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum introduction](#)

30. [Class title 2 \(Gardner Museum\)](#)

31. [Peggy Guggenheim](#)

**Peggy Guggenheim** said that she would like to go down in history for two achievements: discovering **Jackson Pollock** (1912–56) and creating her museum in Venice. I have put together some clips from a 90-minute video called *Peggy Guggenheim, Art Addict*, to show a little of her life. I apologize for the intrusive graphics of the title sequence, but it does manage to cover all the bases with a pretty good balance. After that, we see something of her youth in Paris, her work with Pollock, her exhibition devoted only to women, and her farewell to Paris. After that, I cut to another video taking us inside the Venice museum, including several works by **Max Ernst** (1891–1976), one of her two husbands, but only one of her many lovers. Then we go back to the film for a final word.

32. [Peggy Guggenheim, Art Addict, excerpts](#)

33. [Peggy Guggenheim Museum, samples of the collection](#)

34. [Peggy Guggenheim, Art Addict, final sequence](#)

## D. PAINTING HERSELF, PROMOTING OTHERS

35. [Section title D: Dreier and Parsons](#)

When I started planning this class, I was fascinated to discover that **Katherine Dreier** (1877–1952) and **Betty Parsons** (1900–82) were not only major figures in the 20th-century art scene in New York, but were also painters in their own right, and no slouch at that. However, as the class filled up with details of my ten other wonderwomen, I realized that I was going to have to reduce this section to a relatively brief mention of each.

36. [Duchamp and Dreier](#)

Here is one of those surprising comparisons that crop up in the history of art. Both *Nude Descending a Staircase #2* by **Marcel Duchamp** (1887–1968) and *The Blue Bowl* (1911, Yale) by **Katherine Sophie Dreier** featured in the celebrated 1913 Armory Show. Dreier's was the work of a talented American artist who had studied a bit in France and was just breaking free from naturalism, but Duchamp's was utterly radical, the *succès de scandale* of the show. You wouldn't have thought that the two artists would have had anything in common. But Dreier's eyes were opened. She introduced himself to Duchamp, learned from him, and became his partner. Within five years, she was painting his portrait:

### 37. Katherine Dreier: *Abstract Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1918, NY MoMA)

Now I could show you a lot more of Katherine Dreier's paintings, but you would probably find them rather uneven. Some are stunning; some show her merely borrowing the style of other artists. But that is not why she was such an important figure. She was a passionate activist and a terrific organizer. Immediately the Armory show closed, she organized a group called the **Cooperative Mural Workshop**, to create public art in a modern manner. In 1916, she co-founded the **Society of Independent Artists**, which Duchamp also joined.

### 38. Catalogue for exhibition by the *Société Anonyme*, 1926

When they refused to exhibit his urinal, he resigned, and in 1920 joined Dreier and Man Ray in founding the ***Société Anonyme***, with the secondary name *Museum of Modern Art*. This group held exhibitions in its relatively small premises, and larger shows in borrowed spaces. But its funding was limited and no match for the group of wealthy fundraisers that founded *the* Museum of Modern Art in 1929. But Dreier was the first.

### 39. Betty Parsons: *Sailboat, Rockport*

The teenage **Betty Pierson** was also blown away by the Armory Show and determined to become an artist. Her wealthy parents went along with this for a while, yet were relieved when she married a highly eligible bachelor, **Schuyler Parsons**. But when she divorced him a few years later and determined to remain in Paris, they disinherited her. Living on his alimony until he lost his fortune in the stock market crash, she stayed in France studying painting and sculpture. She returned to the US in 1933, and had her first solo show in New York in 1936, exhibiting watercolors like this one. To earn money, she got a job as a gallery assistant, proved good at it, and soon got other positions with more responsibility for planning exhibitions, and her own list of clients.

### 40. Gallery notices

I don't know who prepared this image that I found on the web, but it represents an important moment. Betty Parsons' boss moved to England after the War, and at the urging of her artists, she rented the space from him and set up on her own. Then **Peggy Guggenheim** closed her **Art of This Century** gallery, as we've already heard, and most of her artists came to Betty in a windfall. Throughout the fifties and sixties, her gallery was the beating heart of **New York Abstract Expressionism**.

Meanwhile, she continued her own **painting**, becoming more like the artists she was representing. And she returned to her first love, **sculpture**, making fascinating constructions out of painted scraps of wood that I personally find more interesting than any of her paintings.

### 41. Betty Parsons paintings

### 42. Betty Parsons sculptures

## E. DOWN THE ROAD IN DC

### 43. Section title E (Wolf Trap and Duke Ellington School)

We started in Baltimore. So to end, let's drive down to Washington and look at the women behind two of its art institutions, Wolf Trap and the Duke Ellington School for the Arts.

### 44. Catherine Filene Shouse

I knew this woman, **Catherine Filene Shouse** (1896–1994), when I was Artistic Director of the **Wolf Trap** Opera back in the 1980s. I don't think I impressed her; I know I thought she was simply a rich old woman with a hobby. There was no Wikipedia then, or I could have known all I found out about her just now.

### 45. Catherine Filene timeline

This is just a small sample. Clearly, she was an activist even in her teens, and that propelled her into a lifetime of government service, and gave her the political connections that enabled her to turn her modest farm in Vienna, Virginia, into a National Park. Wolf Trap was and is a remarkable place. Here are a few rather hyper moments from one of their promotional videos.

### 46. Welcome to Wolf Trap

### 47. The Barns at Wolf Trap

As you can gather, much of the programming at Wolf Trap is of a popular nature. But my experience was with the Opera Company, which assembled some of the finest young singers from the whole country. When I was there, the big Filene Center was being rebuilt after a disastrous fire, so we performed in the more intimate space of **The Barns**, a complex of centuries-old barns transported from farms many miles away and reassembled into a theater and recital hall; it is one of the best spaces I have ever worked in. Alas, I can't show you any of my own productions there, but here is the opening of a more recent one, **Rossini's** *The Touchstone*.

### 48. Rossini: *The Touchstone*, opening (Wolf Trap Opera)

### 49. Peggy Cooper Cafritz

My last woman of influence is an African American, **Peggy Cooper Cafritz** (1947–2018). She could not tell a rags-to-riches story, as her father owned a string of mortuaries across Alabama and was one of the wealthiest people in Mobile. But she certainly had her share of discrimination, that did not stop even when she came to study at **George Washington University** (she eventually got a doctorate in law). But she fought and continued to fight. While still a student at GW, she chaired a **Black Arts Festival**, lobbying for support from the **DC Schools system** and the **Parks and Recreation Department**. All her life, as Wikipedia put it, her goal was "*to bring the money of the white people and the power of the black people in Washington, D.C., together in unity.*" In this respect, her greatest achievement was the foundation, with choreographer **Mike Malone**, of a series of summer workshops that eventually took permanent form as the **Duke Ellington School for the Arts** in 1974. It was to be the model for similar schools all over the country, and involved decades of lobbying through the Washington political and philanthropic scene

that she learned to navigate so well. Here is a very brief clip in which she explains why she is so proud of it, followed by a tribute video made two years after her death.

50. Peggy Cooper Cafritz interview

51. Happy Birthday, Peggy Cooper Cafritz!

Among the Duke Ellington alumni are the comedian **Dave Chappelle** and my former colleague at Peabody, opera star **Denyce Graves**. I was tempted to end with an aria from her signature role, *Carmen*, but instead I have found her singing a song she picked up in Brazil called “Los parajos perdidos,” or The Lost Birds. I think its crossover nature is a better tribute to the vision of Peggy Cafritz.

52. Denyce Graves sings *Los parajos perdidos*

53. Class title 3