

## National Gallery spends £3.6m on rare painting to boost women's art

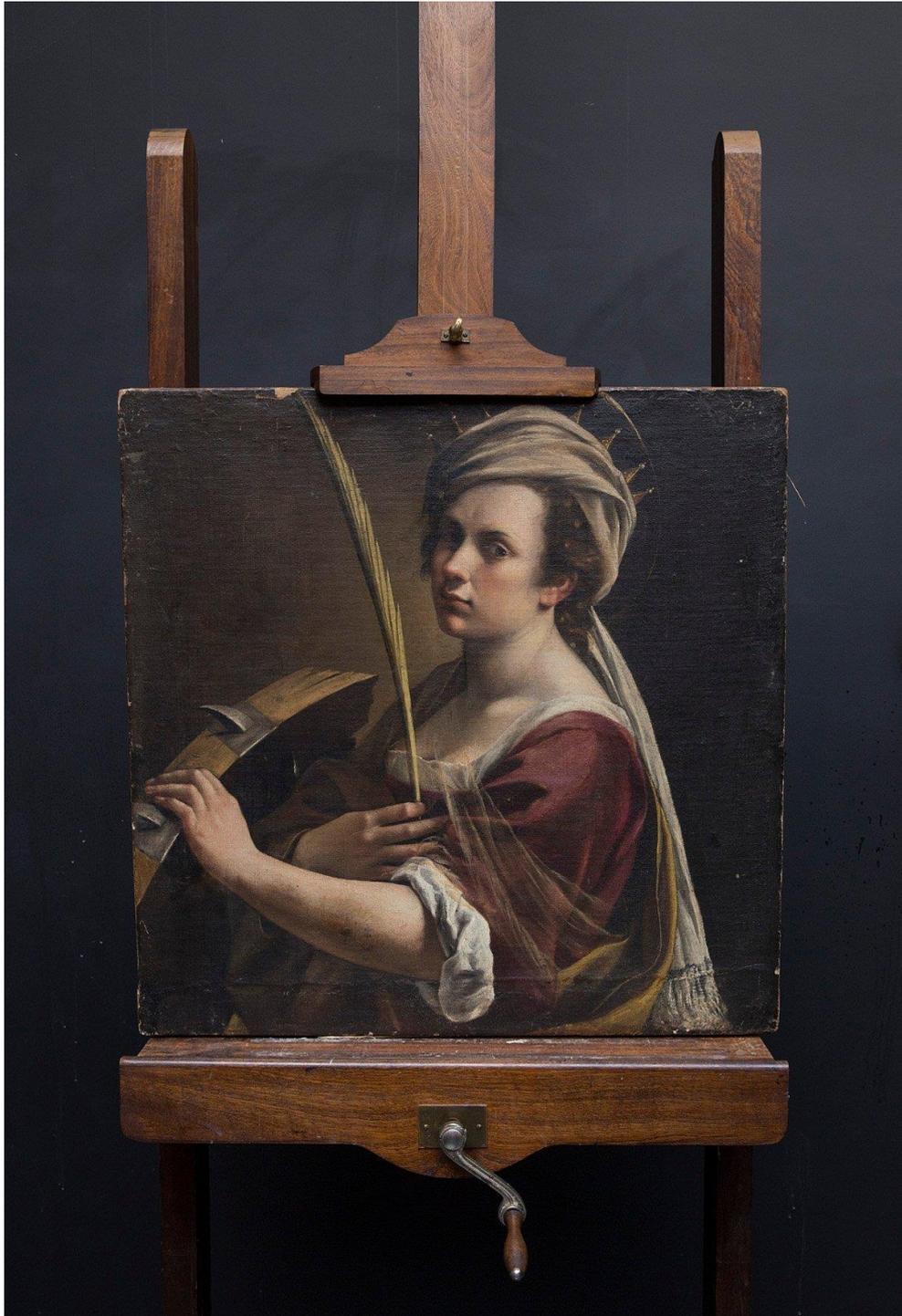
The [National Gallery](#) has spent £3.6 million on a rare self-portrait by a 17th century female painter as part of its attempt to “transform” its collection of [women artists](#).

It has only 24 works by women in a collection of more than 2,300 paintings, drawings and sculptures. Italian artist [Artemisia Gentileschi](#) is thought to have painted Self Portrait As Saint Catherine Of Alexandria, in around 1615.

The daughter of painter Orazio Gentileschi, she was the first woman to become a member of Florence’s Accademia delle Arti del Disegno and, at a time when female artists were not easily accepted, counted the Grand Duke of Tuscany and King Philip IV among her clients.

Gallery trustee Hannah Rothschild said: “The acquisition of this great painting by Artemisia Gentileschi realises a long-held dream of increasing the National Gallery’s collection of paintings by important women artists. Gentileschi was a pioneer, a master storyteller and one of the most progressive and expressive painters of the period. One of a handful of women who was able to shatter the confines of her time, she overcame extreme personal difficulties to succeed in the art of painting. This picture will help us transform how we collect, exhibit and tell the story of women artists throughout history.”

For many years, Gentileschi’s reputation was overshadowed by her ordeal when she was raped aged 18 by another painter, Agostino Tassi, and subjected to a seven-month trial. She is now recognised as one of the greatest painters of her time, but there are only two other paintings by her in this country, including one owned by [the Queen](#).



Artemisia Gentileschi, Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria, about 1615-1617 (The National Gallery, London )

The self-portrait will undergo conservation treatment before it goes on show next year. It was bought with funds raised by supporters of the gallery including its American Friends group who contributed around £2.7 million. Gallery director Dr Gabriele Finaldi said he would be announcing

more about the institution's plans to better represent women artists in the coming months.

He said: "The National Gallery's remit covers western European painting from around 1250 to 1900, however for a great deal of this period women were largely denied the same opportunities that were afforded to men and as a result only a handful were able to succeed in the art of painting.

"Therefore, works by women artists of this period are incredibly rare compared to works by male artists and our collection reflects that historical fact."

Read the full article here: <https://www.standard.co.uk/go/london/arts/national-gallery-spends-36m-on-rare-painting-to-boost-womens-art-a3880901.html>