

The National Gallery acquired an artwork made by a female artist for the first time in 27 years.



Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, about 1615–17. © The National Gallery, London. Courtesy of The National Gallery, London.

Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (1615-17) has become the first artwork by a female artist to the permanent collection of the National Gallery in London in 27 years. The work is only the 21st painting made by a female artist to enter the institution's permanent collection; less than one percent of the National Gallery's 2,300 artworks were made by a female artist.

Director Gabriele Finaldi told *The Telegraph* that this stark gender imbalance is in part due to the time period the gallery focuses on, Western painting from around 1250 to 1900:

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 very rare compared to works by male artists, and our collection reflects that historical fact.

The Gentileschi acquisition is a small but important stepping stone for the museum to introduce a stronger female presence in its collection, but came at no small cost. The glowing self portrait came to auction in Paris last December and sold for £2.3 million, setting a new record for the artist. The National Gallery then contacted the artwork's new owner and purchased the painting from them for £3.6 million. The artwork is undergoing conservation procedures and is scheduled to go on display next year.

Read the full article here: <https://www.artsy.net/news/artsy-editorial-national-gallery-acquired-artwork-made-female-artist-first-time-27-years>