



A DAY IN THE ARTS

Making art accessible to all

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ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI (PART 1)

So why another e-newsletter? And why about art? I have had a passion for art from my earliest years. Many hours were spent roaming our local art museum. Many more hours were spent with my own drawings and paintings. But something happens as we grow older. Somehow, as we get on with the business of life, we begin to lose sight of our early dreams and ideas. We don't often allow ourselves to take the time to enjoy the arts. And for many, lack of education in public schools and a dearth of local galleries and museums, make it difficult to really connect with painters, sculptors, musicians, and the like. Plus, to be honest, many people are intimidated by art venues and professionals. So we offer this daily newsletter in an effort to make "art accessible to all", both those well versed in the art world and the new comer.

What can you expect? A friendly newsletter filled with information on upcoming exhibits, artistic styles and techniques, product and show reviews, biographies (both early and current) and much more. Have a question? Need information? We'll do our best to help there too. We want to truly make this an entertaining and informative newsletter . . . one that you will relish each day. And best of all, there is no charge! So come along with us as we begin this adventure!

Born at a time when there were few professional women artists and life as a woman was often controlled by the men in their lives, Artemisia Gentileschi was able to break free and make a name for herself as an extraordinary painter of historical and religious works. Considered an early Baroque painter, she was heavily influenced by Caravaggio, who is said to have been friends with her father. She was also one

of the first female painters to be admitted to the prestigious Accademia di Arte dle Disegno in Florence.

On July 8, 1593, famed painter Orazio Gentileschi and his wife, Prudentia Montone, welcomed their first child, Artemisia, in Rome, Italy. Orazio would also father four sons but it was Artemisia who would show the most artistic talent of his children. Her mother died when she was only twelve.

While Artemisia was growing up, she spent considerable time in her father's workshop



Above: *The Penitent Magdalen*, 1617-1620 58" x 42", Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence



Left: *Self-portrait as a Female Martyr* ca. 1615, Oil on canvas, 32 x 24 cm



where she learned how to draw, paint and mix colors. In 1610, at age 17, she completed her first major work, *Susanna and the Elders* (above). Some have assumed that her father had helped her with this painting but many agree that her style and approach was different from her father's and this was entirely painted by her. Her signature can be found in the shadow cast by Susanna's legs. In the painting, Susanna is shown being sexually harassed by the male elders of her community. Other painters have created the same scene but shown Susanna to be flirtatious or coy. Artemisia chose to show her as scared and vulnerable and the men menacing.

Her apprenticeship with Orazio was also completed around this time but, being female, she was not allowed to study in the art academies and women were certainly restricted from sketching or painting male nudes. To help her progress, Orazio made the fateful decision to have Artemisia tutored by his friend and collaborator, Augustine Tassi. While he was said to be a proficient artist, his moral character was not. It was during this time that Tassi raped Artemisia.



Above: *Madonna and Child*, c. 1609, 1.165m by 0.865m, Spada Gallery, Rome.

Left: *Susanna and the Elders*, 1610
Oil on canvas, 170 x 119 cm
Collection Graf von Schoenborn, Pommersfelden

(Artemisia's story continues in issue 2.)

Word of the day: **Baroque**

Baroque Art developed in Europe around 1600, as a reaction against the intricate and formulaic Mannerism that dominated the Late Renaissance. Baroque art is less complex, more realistic and more emotionally affecting than Mannerist art. . . One of the great periods of art history, Baroque Art was developed by Caravaggio, Bernini and Carracci, among others. Source: www.artcyclopedia.com