Introduction: Hidden Legacies

> . . . there are some loop-holes out of which a man may creep, and dare to think and act for himself; but for a woman it is a herculean task, because she has difficulties peculiar to her sex to overcome, which require almost superhuman powers.
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> Mary Wollstonecraft[1]

This volume seeks to recover the stories of many women working as printmakers, printsellers, and print publishers in the long eighteenth century whose 'herculean' labour and legacies have been hidden in history, obscured by gender bias. Its chapters are written by scholars with diverse perspectives and expertise, and together they bring forth materials that suggest the powers of the collective contributions of women to the print world.

While scholars, museums, and libraries have given increasing attention to art created by women, much work remains to be done.[2] The present volume aims to undertake investigations to uncover the roles of women who contributed in myriad ways to a narrower arena of the art world – projects of printmaking and printselling. Biases against their gender combined with the lower status of printmaking in the hierarchy of visual art media have meant that women engaged in printmaking have been even less visible and less studied than those who took up painting, sculpture, or drawing.

Despite significant contributions to both the art and the business of graphic culture, women printmakers and print publishers in the eighteenth

[1] M. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London, 1792), 329.

[2] Twenty years ago, Melissa Hyde and Jennifer Milam framed the big questions growing out of feminist work in the early 1970s and declared then that 'women's engagement with the visual arts is a topic about which a great deal remains to be said'. See 'Introduction: Art, Cultural Politics, and the Woman Question', in M. Hyde and J. Milam, eds., *Women, Art, and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth Century Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2 (accessed from yale-ebooks, 24 November 2021).

century have long been relegated to secondary status in national biographies and academic canons.[3] In particular, the presence of women in trade aspects of the visual arts during this period remains relatively unknown and demands greater scholarly attention. Commercial activities of printmaking and printselling were conducted primarily within family households, where the labour of women as creators and entrepreneurs was negatively defined by gender issues pervasive across society. Moreover, while elite women also participated as makers of prints, their status as 'amateurs', rather than professionals, likewise minimized the attention their roles and contributions have received in art historical literature. *Female Printmakers, Printsellers, and Print Publishers in the Eighteenth Century: The Imprint of Women, c. 1700–1830* aims to rectify this lacuna; as such, the edited collection promises to make significant contributions toward further recovering the prominent role played by women in the developing and lucrative print trade as they negotiated inherent artistic, legal and commercial challenges.

Overall, most women in the graphic arts were hidden behind their male counterparts and, thus, their critical contributions to the commercial as well as the creative aspects of graphic culture were forgotten or, worse, went unobserved or ignored. This invisibility stems also from the persistent shadow cast by a marital name or by one's father's name, a problem that became apparent for the authors of this collection who, even with gender parity in mind, had to resort to employing given names in order to avoid confusion with a shared (and sometimes famous) last name. Erika

[3] Exceptions worthy of mention include J. K. Brodsky, 'Some Notes on Women Printmakers', *Art Journal*, 35(4) (Summer 1976): 374–375 and L. Markey, 'The Female Printmaker and the Culture of the Reproductive Print Workshop', in R. Zorach and E. Rodini, eds., *Paper Museums: The Reproductive Print in Europe, 1500–1800* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 51–74. See also the succinct entry by David Alexander on female printmakers in the *Concise Dictionary of Women Artists* under the rubric 'Printmakers', D. Gaze ed. (London and Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), 42–50. The entry had first appeared in vol. 1 (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 61–66. More recently, the exhibition *Printing Women, Three Centuries of Female Printmakers, 1570–1900*, New York Public Library (2015), featured works from the collection of Henrietta Louisa Koenen. Its curator, Madeleine C. Viljoen, also a contributor in this volume, observes that 'women have been active in the medium for almost as long as its origins, in the early to mid-15th century', and adds that the collection 'demonstrates that printmaking in particular was never just a male endeavor'. (Exhibition poster). Selections from this exhibition can be found online at www.nypl.org/printing-women-selections (accessed 2 September 2022). Viljoen also writes on the collection in her article, 'Henrietta Louisa Koenen's (1830–81) Amsterdam Collection of Women Printmakers', in R. E. Iskin and B. Salsbury, eds., *Collecting Prints, Posters and Ephemera: Perspectives in a Global World* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 27–43. Likewise, also reaching into the twentieth century, the recent exhibition *Print and Prejudice: Women Printmakers, 1700–1930* at the V&A (South Kensington, 5 November 2022–7 May 2023) is indicative of this momentum in featuring the works of female artists.

Rackley and Rosemary Auchmuty in their pivotal article on feminist legal history observe that 'there is the *misplaced familiarity*, evidenced by calling women by their first names in a narrative where men are always dignified by their surnames'.[4] The use of first names within this volume, therefore, should not be misconstrued as a means to minimize but rather as an attempt to disambiguate family members.

The reconstruction of past histories, often in the absence of bountiful information, relies on fragmentary evidence of various forms. From legal documents to advertisements, correspondence, pamphlets, and the artworks themselves, the material evidence gathered and investigated by the book's authors reveal various modes and methods of recovery. These include interdisciplinary and multinational perspectives on Dutch, German, English, Italian, French, and American women with forays into biographical details, the detection of family and social networks, the discovery of artworks as well as the development of informative analyses. This compilation, although far-reaching, should not be misconstrued as all-encompassing, as there were many other printmakers, printsellers, and print publishers than those herein; and it is hoped that this is just a beginning in the momentous task of recovering historical traces of their accomplishments. The chapters, thus, invite the reader to find commonalities, make parallels, underline differences, and point to the similar challenges and various strategies these printmakers, printsellers, and print publishers employed in an effort to go about their work.

Fittingly, this volume dedicated to recovering the imprint of women in graphic media begins with the four chapters in Part I that explore the ways in which women printmakers negotiated strategies in their printmaking for self-presentation and self-promotion. Madeleine C. Viljoen's chapter 'Show-Offs' considers ways in which self-portraiture, particularly understudied self-portrait prints, empowered early modern women, both amateurs and professionals, to deliver distinctive statements (to varying degrees of public or private audiences) about their creative identities. These self-portraits were often created under constraints imposed by men, and with due considerations of the potential consequences of any missteps to their reputations. Paris A. Spies-Gans, Heather McPherson, and F. Carlo Schmid focus on highlighting women who engaged with printmaking to promote their professional identities and extend their commercial successes. Maria Cosway's expressly commercial form of print, Spies-Gans

[4] E. Rackley and R. Auchmuty, 'The Case for Feminist Legal History', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 40(4) (2020): 898.

argues, demonstrates how women used 'art to probe the roles, expectations, and constraints that members of their sex automatically faced in the Revolutionary world' and how Cosway's work regularly intersected and engaged with other women writers and artists of the period. F. Carlo Schmid explores the printed work of Maria Katharina Prestel and Marie Ellenrieder, who, like Cosway and following the immediate inspiration and example of Angelika Kauffmann, understood and embraced printmaking as a means to publicly disseminate their art. Heather McPherson's chapter takes as its subject the British professional engraver Caroline Watson, who was exceptional in her independence as well as her printmaking ambition and technical achievement. Watson's commercially viable theatrical prints, which stand out in terms of scale and narrative complexity, serve to elucidate by contrast the challenges that many of her female contemporaries struggled against with less success.

Turning from accounts of women who achieved high public profiles and obtained substantial commercial successes, Part II considers the spaces of less visible women printmakers who worked largely in the shadow of male family members. Their historically obscured presences are uncovered through archival research and, perhaps most prominently, through evidence in the surviving works that can be ascribed to them. How were they supported or constrained by the social, political, and legal circumstances of their gendered lives? Hannah Lyons and Kelsey D. Martin each explore the complex realities of the advantages and restrictions of working in a family workshop as many women did, against the challenges for a woman to become a printmaker without family support. Framing her account in the context of economic life in London, Lyons focuses on the role and status of women within these families and spaces, and asks important questions about what women did and did not do in the printmaker's workshop and how their instruction and training compared to that offered to male relatives. Martin's chapter compares the life narratives and artistic practices of two sets of sister-printmakers working and living in eighteenth-century Paris: the Horthemels sisters and the Hémery sisters, whose relative obscurity within contemporary scholarship belies their lifetime recognition as some of the most well-respected female intaglio engravers who produced printed images for commercial art markets. The careers of these women, Martin demonstrates, dispelled longstanding myths that female engravers were anonymous artisans who never claimed artistic authority over their work. Rena M. Hoisington likewise focuses on France with a study of the successful professional printmaker Catherine Élisabeth Cousinet and asks what her career in eighteenth-century France looked like and how her

achievement could be measured given the dearth of historical information and the predominance of male voices. After critically working through available biographical information, Hoisington turns her curatorial eye to assessing the execution and quality of the prints themselves in affirmation that the works are invaluable evidence. Likewise, Rita Bernini's chapter on Laura Piranesi relies heavily on the qualities of her only surviving etchings, a series of twenty views of Rome, together with historical accounts and newly discovered archival records, to offer an enhanced narrative of a woman long overshadowed by the enormous fame of her father, Giambattista Piranesi. Bernini builds an account of the daughter's training in the family workshop and convincingly analyses her etchings to identify her distinct hand. Cynthia E. Roman explores the work of noble women etchers whose social status prevented them from working in the trade or openly accepting remuneration. While these circumstances have largely fated them to a long-standing legacy as amateurs, Roman offers a reconsideration of the substantial engagement of noble women etchers as integral players in the production, connoisseurship, and exchange of prints through brief cases studies.

Women who worked productively in the business of publishing and selling prints are the subject of Part III. Sheila O'Connell presents new archival records filling out the story of Mary Darly by demonstrating her entrepreneurial prowess in print publishing, first in partnership with her husband Matthew Darly, and later, on her own. O'Connell's archival discoveries have also allowed her to identify Mary Darly's hand on some of the prints she published. Amy Torbert's chapter discusses the role of women in publishing and selling prints while creating opportunities during a time of changes to the industry in the London of 1740–1800. She sets the stage for case studies of individual women print publishers and printsellers that more closely document the opportunities open to them within family enterprises and as independent proprietors. Cristina S. Martinez's study of Jane Hogarth introduces a body of important new evidence discovered in the archives of record offices, in newspaper advertisements, and in other documentation that brings greater clarity to her significant contribution, not only as an astute businesswoman and printseller, but as a highly savvy political actor in the legal history of copyright. Other women likewise exercised considerable influence as print publishers of the most important graphic satirists of the time. Tracing Hannah Humphrey's beginnings in a family business, Tim Clayton notes that ultimately her alliance with James Gillray transformed her from a retailer who dabbled in publishing into a major publisher and, effectively, secured

her fortune as well as his. Humphrey likely took an active role in generating ideas for Gillray's needle and for finding opportunities to cater to a female clientele. Nicholas JS Knowles uncovers the remarkable role that women played in publishing the prints of Thomas Rowlandson: at least ninety prints from his early career, between 1780 and 1790, were issued by enterprising women print publishers, including Elizabeth Jackson, Hannah Humphrey, Elizabeth d'Achery, Elizabeth Bull, and Eleanor Lay. Most prominently, Knowles demonstrates the full extent of Jackson's long-obscured production through close analysis of evidence from Rowlandson's prints, particularly his unattributed non-satirical works, and other sources.

Reaching across the Atlantic, women print publishers in America are represented in the chapter by Allison M. Stagg. Stagg's work on Eliza Cox Akin and Mary Graham Charles offers an alternative strategy for recovering hidden legacies of women printsellers. Beginning with scant archival traces of Akin's life activities, Stagg provides an informed historical context to reimagine Akin's obscured identity and contributions to printmaking. This is followed by her observations on Mary Charles who managed a print and book selling business in Philadelphia, the same city where Akin also operated.

The collected body of new knowledge presented in this volume disrupts conventional views about the exclusion of women from printmaking, printselling, and print publishing, and instead reveals a much more vibrant participation of diverse women, long obscured in hidden legacies, who did make important and innovative contributions to print production in the long eighteenth century. Newly discovered evidence allows for more complex narratives that challenge accepted histories which virtually exclude women from anything but secondary roles in family workshops and open the possibilities to study the ways women capitalized on the potential of graphic media for self-representation, self-promotion, and economic opportunity. The volume as a whole puts pressure on perceived norms about spaces where women could thrive as makers or in business, and on how both professional and amateur actors had their place in practice and theory. Individually, each chapter adds to the body of knowledge on the imprint left by women, and together, they expose an undeniable truth: women actively participated in the print trade throughout the long eighteenth century.

They are still active today; yet female artists continue to face biases and struggle for recognition. Honouring their continued efforts and work, we chose to feature Lou McKeever's design on the cover of this volume.

McKeever's play on the title page for *Darly's Comic-Prints. of Characters. Caricatures. Macaronies &c* pays homage to Mary Darly, the eighteenth-century artist who inspires her, and ingeniously represents various roles of the print trade in female hands.

A Note on Images

In most cases only one image per chapter is included, with web links often provided. References to specific impressions of prints in major collections are given register or accession numbers where possible. We have imposed case standardization on the titles of prints and images for consistency.

PART I

Self-Presentation and Self-Promotion

CHAPTER 1

Show-Offs
Women's Self-Portrait Prints c. 1700

Madeleine C. Viljoen

The self-portrait empowered early modern women artists to deliver distinctive statements about their creative identities.[1] Barred until the early nineteenth century from live-model drawing within the context of their academic training, women found other outlets for studying the body, regularly focusing their attention on figures to which they could devote close and unfettered observation, which is to say friends, family and self.[2] Focused on paintings and drawings, however, studies of the topic have largely omitted prints, neglecting to contemplate how consideration of this medium might nuance our understanding of women's contribution to the genre. From the time print workshops were established in the sixteenth century, women were regularly tasked with the reproduction of historical and allegorical subjects their male peers had invented, including narratives that featured the nude, the study of which the academy had long banned them. Conversely, even as male artists from the late fifteenth century

[1] Well-known works by Sofonisba Anguissola, Lavinia Fontana, Elisabetta Sirani, and others who take themselves as subjects for their own art lend substance to this argument. See, for example, M. D. Garrard, 'Here's Looking at Me: Sofonisba and the Problem of the Woman Artist', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47 (1994): 556–622; S. Ffolliott, 'Early Modern Women Artists', in A. M. Poska , J. Couchman, and K. A. McIver, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2013), 429; F. Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 17–101; C. King, 'Looking a Sight: Sixteenth-Century Portraits of Woman Artists', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 58:3 (1995): 381–406; and B. Bohn, 'Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna', *Renaissance Studies*, 18:2 (2004): 239–86.

[2] The locus classicus for the argument that the careers of women artists suffered as a result of the academy's prohibition on their study of the live model is the ground-breaking article by L. Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' in V. Gornick and B. Morgan, eds., *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness* (New York: Basic, 1971), 480–510. For evidence that Nochlin's thesis, which has long held sway, deserves to be reexamined, see P. A. Spies-Gans, 'Why Do We Think There Have Been No Great Women Artists? Revisiting Linda Nochlin and the Archive', *Art Bulletin*, 104:2 (2022): 74–81. For Sofonisba's reliance on members of her family as subjects for her art, see M. W. Cole, *Sofonisba's Lesson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 86–89.

enthusiastically embraced the self-portrait print as a site for broadcasting their distinctiveness as authors and inventors, female artists and creators were notably less eager to incorporate it into their practice.[3] Print travelled far and wide, enabling men who etched or engraved their self-portraits to flaunt their accomplishments and fulfil their aspirations of undying fame. Women's reliance on the same techniques for self-advancement was substantially more troubled, however. By showing themselves off, by literally exposing themselves to the public eye, they risked not covering themselves in glory but – like the widely shared medium in which the images were created – inviting comparison of themselves with the common street-walker.[4] These and other circumstances suggest that a rather different set of criteria was at stake when it came to how women approached making prints and especially what they understood to be suitable themes for their involvement with them. This chapter examines several self-portrait prints from the eighteenth century to explore some of the concerns that went into how women shaped their appearances with the knowledge that, by making themselves subjects for everyone to see and potentially own, they were walking a fine line between establishing their prominence and committing a potentially perilous offence for which they would be judged, often in terms that assailed their virtue and/or questioned their beauty. Loath to attract this sort of attention, eighteenth-century women, this chapter finds, either avoided using the medium for self-portrayal altogether or leaned heavily on male authority figures and veiled allusion to account for and justify their representations.

Two etchings by Maria de Wilde (1682–1729) from the very beginning of the eighteenth century bring this discussion into focus, pointing to the challenges female creators would face for the next 100 years and beyond. Without precedent – apart from etchings by Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) – the works illustrate the care de Wilde put into crafting her image, mindful that the choice not just to pick up the etching needle but also to make herself the topic of print were hazardous undertakings. Riding on the reputation and social status of her father, Jacob de Wilde

[3] For early modern portrait prints, including self-portraits, largely by men, see V. S. Lobis, *Van Dyck, Rembrandt and the Portrait Print* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016) and C. Harris, *Portraiture in Prints* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1987).

[4] For a discussion of the connections between public speech/print and harlotry, see E. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers in the Renaissance* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987) and A. R. Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540–1620* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990).