A 12-EPISODE VIDEO SERIES

Women’s Art History Explained

A journey of 45,000+ years through women’s creativity

Teachers’ Discussion Kit

mikonoart.com

12 episodes · discussion questions with video timestamps · links to the free textbook Herstory

How to use this kit

This kit goes with the 12-episode video series *Women's Art History Explained*. Each episode has its own page with discussion questions and a link to the matching chapter of the free textbook *Herstory: A History of Women Artists*. (*Discover hundreds of more women artists from all around the world on Mikono Art's YouTube channel!*)

A simple way to run a lesson

1. **Watch.** Play the episode. The timestamp beside each question shows where the topic comes up, so you can pause there or use the questions afterwards.
2. **Discuss.** Choose two or three questions for your class. Some questions are open-ended.
3. **Read.** Send students to the Herstory chapter linked on the episode page for the deeper story.

The 12 episodes at a glance

Episode	Art movements	Period	Herstory
EP01	Ancient Art	45,000 BCE – 499 CE	Chapter 2
EP02	Medieval Art, Renaissance & Mannerism	500 – 1600 CE	Chapter 3
EP03	Baroque, Dutch Golden Age & Asian Ink	1600 – 1700 CE	Chapter 4
EP04	Rococo, Neoclassicism & Indigenous Art of North America	1700 – 1800 CE	Chapter 5
EP05	Realism, Impressionism & Quilts	1800 – 1900 CE	Chapter 6
EP06	Fauvism, Cubism & Expressionism	1900 – 1940 CE	Chapter 7
EP07	Bauhaus, Harlem Renaissance & Surrealism	1920s – 1940s	Chapter 7
EP08	Abstract Expressionism & Bay Area Figurative	Late 1940s – 1970s	Chapter 8
EP09	Pop Art, Op Art & Minimalism	1950s – 1970s	Chapter 8
EP10	Feminist Art & Modern Indigenous Art	1970 – 2000 CE	Chapter 9
EP11	Modern Sculpture & Young British Artists	1970 – 2000 CE	Chapter 9

Episode	Art movements	Period	Herstory
EP12	Photorealism, Cinematographic Art & Manga/Anime	1950 – 2000 CE	Chapter 9

EP01 · Ancient Art

45,000 BCE – 499 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 2

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:04	Why does the video begin in darkness inside a cave, and how does this setting help us understand the origins of art?
2	0:38	What evidence does the video present that women created many of the ancient handprint artworks found in caves around the world?
3	1:27	The narrator says early art was “magic, memory, survival.” What might these handprints have been communicating to their communities?

EP02 · Medieval Art, Renaissance & Mannerism

500 – 1600 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 3

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:32	How did working inside a convent shape the kind of art women were able to create?
2	0:53	What does Herrad of Landsberg's encyclopaedia reveal about women's access to knowledge in the medieval period?
3	1:40	Why was linear perspective such a revolutionary discovery in Renaissance art?
4	2:12	What does Sofonisba Anguissola's story reveal about women's visibility in art history?
5	3:51	If you weren't allowed to be an artist, would you still make art — and how would you do it?

EP03 · Baroque, Dutch Golden Age & Asian Ink

1600 – 1700 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 4

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:28	Why did 1600s artists paint with such deep shadows?
2	1:02	What makes Artemisia Gentileschi's story important for art history?
3	1:48	How did Mary Beale succeed in a male-dominated art world?
4	2:23	What emotions do you see in Judith Leyster's daylight scenes?
5	2:50	How does Wen Shu use ink to create calm and precision?
6	3:09	What does Shin Saimdang's life reveal about Confucian expectations for women?

EP04 · Rococo, Neoclassicism & Indigenous Art of North America

1700 – 1800 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 5

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:00	How did Indigenous women use art as a visual language long before European traditions?
2	0:40	What kinds of knowledge can be carried through objects like baskets, beadwork or clothing?
3	0:58	How can art function as a memory system within a community?
4	1:09	Why is it important that contemporary Indigenous artists reclaim these traditions today?
5	1:20	How did women artists challenge expectations within Rococo and the European art world?
6	2:12	What made Neoclassicism a powerful space for women to reshape artistic storytelling?
7	2:57	Across cultures, how does art help record identity and history — and how do we use art for this today?

EP05 · Realism, Impressionism & Quilts

1800 – 1900 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 6

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:49	What social changes in the Industrial Age made Realism possible?
2	1:06	How did portable easels and paint tubes transform artistic freedom?
3	1:35	Why was Rosa Bonheur's choice to wear trousers considered revolutionary?
4	1:54	How did Marie Bashkirtseff use art and writing as acts of survival?
5	1:14	What emotional difference defines Realism and Impressionism?
6	2:54	How do Mary Cassatt and Louise Breslau express identity through light and gesture?
7	3:36	What do the stories of Underground Railroad quilts reveal about women's coded communication?

EP06 · Fauvism, Cubism & Expressionism

1900 – 1940 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 7

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:06	What does it mean when women decide to paint not the world outside, but the world inside?
2	1:03	How does Nadežda Petrović use colour to express emotion rather than scenery?
3	1:59	In what ways did Tarsila do Amaral transform Cubism into a Brazilian visual language?
4	02:48	How does Käthe Kollwitz reveal reality instead of distorting it through Expressionism?
5	03:46	Which art movement — Fauvism, Cubism or Expressionism — feels closest to the world we live in today?

EP07 · Bauhaus, Harlem Renaissance & Surrealism

1920s – 1940s

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 7

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:32	What do “design, identity, and dreams” each represent in the context of post-World War I art movements?
2	1:15	How did women at the Bauhaus transform modern design even when limited to weaving workshops?
3	2:25	Why did Harlem, New York, declare “This is who we are,” and how did artists like Augusta Savage express that identity?
4	3:50	How did women surrealists challenge the male idea of the “femme enfant” and redefine imagination?

EP08 · Abstract Expressionism & Bay Area Figurative

Late 1940s – 1970s

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 8

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:00	What emotions do students feel when they look at Abstract Expressionism?
2	0:21	How does post-war chaos influence artistic expression?
3	1:22	Why did artists move from representation to gesture and improvisation?
4	2:00	How does Helen Frankenthaler's soak-stain technique change the relationship between paint and canvas?
5	2:26	What emotions or memories do Joan Mitchell's paintings evoke?
6	2:51	How did San Francisco's social environment — civil rights, gay rights, women's rights — shape its art scene?
7	3:06	How does Joan Brown's focus on everyday life and identity differ from New York's Abstract Expressionism?

EP09 · Pop Art, Op Art & Minimalism

1950s – 1970s

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 8

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:37	How did women artists in Pop Art challenge the way female figures were portrayed in mass media?
2	1:09	Compare Andy Warhol's *Marilyn* with Pauline Boty's *Marilyn*. What artistic choices change the meaning?
3	2:51	How do Bridget Riley's optical illusions demonstrate the link between mathematics and visual perception?
4	3:55	In what ways did Minimalist artists like Agnes Martin express emotion through repetition and geometry?
5	4:26	How does Eva Hesse's use of industrial materials redefine what "human" means in Minimalist sculpture?

EP10 · Feminist Art & Modern Indigenous Art

1970 – 2000 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 9

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:21	Why did art become an important tool for protest and social change during the 1970s and 1980s?
2	1:10	How did Linda Nochlin's question, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", change the way art history was studied and understood?
3	1:34	How did the Guerrilla Girls use humour and statistics to challenge sexism in museums and galleries?
4	1:58	Why is Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" considered a landmark work in feminist art?
5	2:30	How did Ana Mendieta use her body and natural materials to explore themes of identity, belonging and exile?
6	2:56	How does Modern Indigenous Art connect contemporary artistic expression with cultural memory, land and tradition?

EP11 · Modern Sculpture & Young British Artists

1970 – 2000 CE

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 9

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	1:40	How did new materials like welded metal and concrete transform modern sculpture?
2	2:15	How does Louise Bourgeois turn memory and trauma into monumental art?
3	3:00	How did Magdalena Abakanowicz use textiles to express war and identity?
4	3:37	What made the Young British Artists so rebellious and unforgettable?
5	4:11	How does Tracey Emin’s My Bed redefine vulnerability as art?
6	4:30	What does Rachel Whiteread reveal by sculpting empty spaces?

EP12 · Photorealism, Cinematographic Art & Manga/Anime

Watch: mikonoart.com **Read:** Herstory, Chapter 9

Discussion questions

#	Watch at	Question
1	0:56	How did Photorealism use technology to change the way artists represented reality?
2	2:34	Why did video and cinematographic art challenge traditional ideas about what could be considered art?
3	3:57	How did Manga and Anime create new opportunities for women artists and storytellers?
4	5:40	After exploring more than 45,000 years of women's art history, which contributions by women artists do you feel have been most overlooked in traditional art history narratives?

Credits and sources

Herstory: A History of Women Artists by Deborah Gustlin and Zoe Gustlin, Evergreen Valley College, is licensed under CC BY 4.0. The videos and this kit are adaptations of that work. Not an official publication of the authors or Evergreen Valley College.

Read the free textbook: Herstory: A History of Women Artists (LibreTexts)

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