

The social and political issues of being a woman artist in the 1970s

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The 1970s posed as a turning point for many in society; Women, people of color, LGBTQ members, and war protesters all had their chance to speak up for their identity, who they were destined to be without a choice, but what did that offer to their livelihood? Now that they were heard and seen, what would they do with their new found glory in a predominantly male dominated world? More specifically what would women do to show up their past counter-parts? In Linda Nochlin's essay, " Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," she tackles the idea of what it is like to be a female artist in the 1970s, more specifically why female artists have never been held to the same degree as their male competitors. This essay would cannon put the women's art feminist movement and challenge the status quo of the 1970s as well as holding true into today's society.

Linda Nochlin's essay did in fact challenge the status quo of the 1970s in several ways, the first being that she wrote out against her male counterparts. That in and of itself challenged most literally everything the majority of the " superior" beings (men) in and out of her field would have allowed her to say. Second, Nochlin's evidence is that it is not the artists individual problem that there are " no great female artists," but rather it is society's fault that female artists have not gotten the recognition that they deserved. Nochlin strongly weighed in on the idea that women's limited role in society is truly what is denying a women's opportunity in art, " I have suggested that it is indeed institutionally made impossible for women to achieve artistic excellence or success on the same footing of men, no matter what the potence of their so-called talent or genius." this meaning that during her time there was a double-standard of, men can do what women do,

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but not vice versa, which was single handedly one of the sole reasons women were not taken seriously in art.

The second and the most challenging part of Nochlin's argument was that she insisted on women being brave; they take a risk and destroy self-doubt. This is quite possibly the hardest task for some, if not most, women artists during 1971 to accomplish. At the start of women wanting to be included in art, they were not allowed in art schools due to social constraints on whether or not women were allowed to study the nude human body in their artwork. Being able to draw and study the nude human body was essential to becoming an artist and it wasn't until 1893 women were allowed to look at the nude body for art, but even then the body had to be draped and covered. These kinds of rules and bonds that were placed on women were the consequence of a failed art school system predominantly made by men for men, which ensured that women will always be seen as the lesser intellectual. This is where Nochlin insists that women continue to make art, they continue to put themselves out there because even if men ruled their world then, they shouldn't now; " but no amount of manipulating the historical or critical evidence will alter the situation; nor will accusations of male-chauvinist distortion of history," meaning that men may have once held their spots in art, but the more that women create and do in this day and age means less room for the male artist, nothing has changed that in the past, but society is now ever-changing and it always will.

Linda Nochlin's essay, " Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists" tackled the social and political issues of being a woman artist in the 1970s;

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not only did she challenge the status quo, but she also helped found the women's feminist movement which is still prominent and working on getting female artists recognition today.