

Rena Tobey

Catalog of Talks and Classes



About Rena

Rena's greatest passion is making art accessible, invigorating, insightful, and fun. She teaches art history at NYU's School for Professional Studies and conducts lively, interactive tours of museum collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New-York Historical Society, Jewish Museum, and American Folk Art Museum. She provides online talks on American art and historical women artists for a variety of community organizations such as New York Public Library, New York Adventure Club, Scarsdale Adult School, Shady Ladies Tours, and Classi Learning. Just for fun, she has created Artventures!® Game--a cheeky party game on the adventures of art and art history.

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Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Women Artists from the Renaissance to the Pre-Raphaelites



Elisabetta Sirani
Self-Portrait
1658

Art history often focuses on the celebrity genius—exceptional men who mark an era. Too often, extraordinary women artists have been overlooked despite their inventiveness, popularity, and resounding triumphs in their era.

Why are works by women artists often overshadowed and even forgotten? This course considers how women had to navigate societal expectations with their drive to be recognized as professionals. Often, they faced difficult choices, sacrificing in their personal lives or career options. Others battled societal and professional restrictions, with mixed results.

Even the most admired and accomplished fell into obscurity upon their death, no matter the successes they achieved while living. Together, we will resuscitate and celebrate the art careers of historical women, including:

- Sophonisba Anguissola
- The Gifts of Renaissance Bologna
- Fierce and Fabulous Artemisia Gentileschi
- The Golden Age of Dutch and Flemish Masters
- 18th-century British Academicians Mary Moser and Angelica Kauffmann
- The Revolution of Élizabeth Vigée-Lebrun and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard
- Rosa Bonheur Taking Charge
- British PreRaphaelites and Marie Spartali Stillman

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

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Courses and Talks



Sophonisba Anguissola



Sophonisba. Anguissola. *The Chess Game*. 1555.

“The Queen’s Gambit” has nothing on this first international superstar woman artist. Linking Michelangelo, the Medici, the Court of Spain, and Anthony van Dyke, Sophonisba Anguissola was the first woman to become an international celebrity artist. She cleverly used societal restrictions to shape her own image, then leveraged her prodigious skill with witty, warm, and gentle-warrior energy. Come learn about this Italian Renaissance painter who broke all the rules for noble women and was celebrated for her daring, in turn generously mentoring new generations of nobles and artists alike.

In this image-rich talk, we will learn about:

- how artistic styles of the Renaissance migrated from artist to artist, place to place
- the role of self-portraits in Anguissola’s portfolio
- how Anguissola used intimate family images to reveal everyday life for women in the 1500s
- the complications of a woman artist’s life at court
- her career success that brought the art world to her

Come revel in the beautiful glories of Anguissola’s work and delight in her life stories, more wondrous than fiction.

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Courses and Talks

The Gifts of Renaissance Bologna



Lavinia Fontana
Isabella Ruini as Venus
1592



Elisabetta Sirani
Virgin and Child
1663-1664

Properzia de' Rossi, Lavinia Fontana, and Elisabetta Sirani are just three of the over 15 active women artists working in Bologna in the 1500s and 1600s. What made Bologna both fertile ground and hospitable to women artists?

This talk demonstrates the influence of the university and a liberal arts education on attitudes toward women's achievements. Properzia de' Rossi could carve the marble doors of a church or the tiny seed from a cherry, remarkable in specificity and dynamism. Lavinia Fontana took conventions and manners that might hamper a less formidable woman and used that knowledge to forge lucrative relations with the local power families and reveal the complexity of women's characters. Elisabetta Sirani, in her terribly shortened life, supported her extended family with her career success, painting loveliness in her religious and mythological scenes.

These women reveal how important not only talent is in furthering success, but also the value of a supportive environment like their city of Bologna. The results are treasures.

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Courses and Talks



Fierce and Fabulous Artemisia Gentileschi



Artemisia Gentileschi
Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting
1630

Celebrating the fiery genius of Artemisia Gentileschi, who broke the rules and wore her battle scars with determination

Art history often focuses on the celebrity genius—exceptional men who mark an era. Too often, extraordinary women artists have been overlooked despite their inventiveness, popularity, and resounding triumphs in their era—certainly true of women making art in the 1600s.

Artemisia Gentileschi was not going to take this lying down! Instead, she challenged every societal rule that put women in their place. And she upped the ante in the art world. Unheard of in her day, she worked in her father's art workshop, then outshone everyone around her and rose to the top of the art scene in Rome and Florence. In this image-rich talk, we will learn about:

- the artistic style of the Baroque—art made in the 1600s
- how Artemisia used her own image to tell the stories of heroines and saints
- paintings depicting familiar scenes that open our eyes when shown from a woman's point of view
- the complications of considering an artist's life story when analyzing her work
- her career success that prompted changes in her painting subjects and style

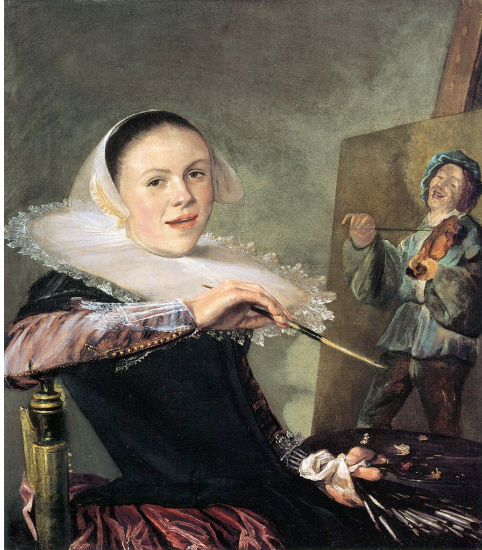
Come revel in Artemisia's heroic depictions of eternal heroines—and leave a little braver yourself.

Note: the images in this presentation include scenes of nudity and Biblical violence

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Golden Age of Dutch and Flemish Masters



Judith Leyster. *Self-Portrait*. c1633.



Clara Peeters. *Still Life with Cheeses, Almonds, and Pretzels*. c1615.

Following tremendous political and economic turmoil, The Golden Age of the Netherlands in the 1600s generated new global connections and sophistication, the birth of the art market, and opportunities for women artists.

In Holland, Judith Leyster joined 'merry company' through her joyful paintings of plenty and became a star. Clara Peeters is considered one of the first still life painters anywhere, and she helped established the breakfast picture and the banquet picture. You'll leave hungry.

Michaelina Wautier, in Flanders, today's Belgium, depicted everyday life and religious scenes with equal naturalism and bravura. Working with a 'manly' brush, she accomplished huge scale commissions and parlor-sized paintings of great tenderness.

These artists typify the exuberantly cosmopolitan art world of this newly prosperous region, and we rejoice in equal pleasure today.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

18th-century British Academicians Mary Moser and Angelica Kauffmann



Mary Moser
Summer
c1780



Angelica Kauffmann
Design
1778-1780

Two women artists were part of the founding of the influential Royal Academy—part school, part social club, part exhibition salon. They certainly didn't have an easy time achieving universal respect. Their stories, filled with self-assurance and resilience, serve as models for anyone facing gender restrictions.

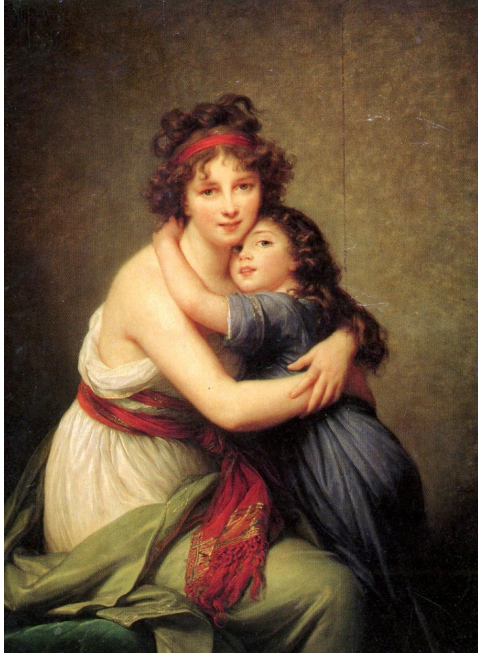
Mary Moser benefited from her father's connections, as he also was an Academy founder. But it was her own moxie that led to her court commissions with particular favor by the Queen. Swiss-born Angelica Kauffmann chose to make her career in London. Prodigiously talented and working in the high style of Neoclassicism, Kauffman became a favorite with London's society. Ultimately, scandal and gossip led Kauffman to move to Rome where her talents were embraced more openly.

Come consider the broader culture of England during this Enlightenment period, and how these women rose above unenlightened attitudes and behaviors to succeed.

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Courses and Talks

The Academie Royale and Superstars Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard



Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun
Self-Portrait with the Artist's Daughter
1789



Adélaïde Labille-Guiard
Self-Portrait with Two Pupils
1785

We may expect the French art world to be liberal and accepting of those who push boundaries, but the reality is usually quite different. The Revolutionary era was no exception. Come learn about this turbulent moment in French history through the eyes of two of its most accomplished women artists—Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. Pitted against each other by the reactionary press, the two artists moved through the late 1700s with very different strategies--and survived to tell the tale!

In this image-rich talk, we will learn about:

- how art changed before, during, and after the French Revolution
- the role of women artists in The Academie Royale
- how Vigée Le Brun became a success at court and the repercussions with the Revolution
- marketing strategies that built Labille-Guiard's reputation and the resulting effects during the Revolution
- how career success was defined and used by each of these artists for her lasting legacy

Immerse in the beauty of these women artists' paintings, while learning about their often surprising lives during this time of crisis.

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Courses and Talks



Rosa Bonheur Taking Charge



Rosa Bonheur. *The Horse Fair*. 1852-1855.

Art history often focuses on the celebrity genius—exceptional men who mark an era. Too often, extraordinary women artists have been overlooked despite their inventiveness, popularity, and resounding triumphs in their era—certainly true of women making art in France in the 1800s.

But nothing was going to stop Rosa Bonheur from her calling—as an artist and unprecedented, as a woman depicting animals in paint and bronze. She challenged societal rules that restricted where women could go and what they could learn. From the slaughterhouse to public auctions, from the Highlands of Scotland to the forests of Fontainebleau, Bonheur surged forward on her quest to show animals with regal splendor, in all their metaphorical glory.

In this image-rich talk, we will learn about:

- the artistic style of Realism in France
- the limitations on how most women lived in Paris in the 1800s
- Bonheur's determined boldness and dedication to being an artist, blasting through considerable societal obstacles
- her tremendous career success, both in the conventional art world and with the public, in the male-dominated world of the animalier - a portrayer of animals
- the story of how her greatest masterpiece, and one of the all-time great French paintings, ended up in an American museum
- the unusual friendships Bonheur cultivated, including with Buffalo Bill Cody
- Bonheur's cloaked personal life, including two devoted lesbian love relationships

Come revel in Rosa Bonheur's heroic depictions of powerful animals, symbols for her strength, human harmony with the natural world, and the raw transcendence of the nation itself. No doubt, her majestic work will leave you feeling bolder yourself.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



The Pre-Raphaelites and Marie Spartali Stillman



Marie Spartali Stillman
Love's Messenger
1885

How did historical women navigate the art world? Stepping into the public sphere of business, marketing, and meeting and shaping taste, Spartali Stillman had to carefully navigate her conventional world to ultimately achieve success.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRBs) rebelled against an art world that evaluated quality based on conventional techniques established in the Renaissance. Spurred by cultural critic John Ruskin, these young British artists sought a return to more 'natural' expression, as created before the artist Raphael. Their late 19th century work frequently depicted women, revealing surprisingly traditional ideas given their revolutionary creators. Come learn how these artists told stories through their art, both literary and about their contemporary world. See also how one woman, Marie Spartali Stillman, established herself, working both within the group and through her own voice.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Art Shaping the American Identity, 1720-1920



Thomas Cole. *The Oxbow*. 1836.

Come explore the sweep of American art from the colonial era to the 20th century, placing various artists and styles within the complex narrative of what it means to be American. During this election season, reflect on our political, social, and cultural roots through the historical lens of paintings, sculpture, photography, and more. Course topics include colonial portraiture, landscape paintings, everyday life and the emergence of American archetypes, the Civil War and its aftermath, urban experience after the Civil War, and the rise of African American and immigrant artists' voices:

- John Singleton Copley and Dressing the Colonies (also Clothes Make the Country)
- Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School: Landscapes as Political Documents
- William Sidney Mount and Painting People of the Early Nation
- Winslow Homer and John Rogers Tackle the Civil War
- Thomas Eakins and Changing Roles for White Men
- Finding Her Way: Women Artists Paint Urban Women's Experiences 1840-1940
- Henry Ossawa Tanner and African American Voices Rise
- The Immigrant Experience, 1850-1950

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Clothes Make the Country/John Singleton Copley and Dressing the Colonies



John Singleton Copley. *Nicholas Boylston*. c1769.

John Singleton Copley was the first homegrown American artist superstar. Essentially self-taught and with a smart marketing eye, he was in-demand for his forthright, yet charming portraits during the late colonial period.

American colonial portraits provide viewers important clues into the values, aspirations, and daily lives of men, women, and children in the 18th century. By closely examining several works, especially the clothing and accessories portrayed, participants will discover how paintings reflect the shaping of our unique American identity. This interactive session provides fresh ways to consider the formation of a nation.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School: Landscapes as Political Documents



Thomas Cole. *Kaaterskill Falls*. 1826.

When you think of America, vast expanses of land may be what you think of first. Come explore how American identity has been shaped by images of the land. In this interactive talk, we'll dig beyond the surface layers that create a streamlined, but simplistic notion of the American character. We'll take a slow look at paintings that tell complex, often coded stories, reflecting both the challenges and greatness of our country. Topics include:

- The Beautiful, Picturesque, and Sublime in Nature
- Thomas Cole and Conservation
- The Vanishing Native American
- Conquest in South America
- Manifest Destiny and the West
- The Formation of National Parks
- Healing in Nature

Leave refreshed, with renewed vigor for our natural world and all its meaning.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

William Sidney Mount and Painting People of the Early Nation



William Sidney Mount. *Farmer's Noonin'*. 1836.

Long-Island painter William Sidney Mount made his name painting the everyday lives of Americans from the 1830s until the Civil War. We will explore how his art landed in so many middle-class households, reflecting back anxieties of the moment. Growing in complexity as the artist matured and American politics became increasingly fractured, his paintings are deeply coded with references viewers in the day would have readily understood.

In this talk, we reveal those seemingly hidden meanings to educate ourselves with insider's eyes, looking at regional and racial tropes and attitudes Mount shows with wit and insight. You may be surprised how relevant these ways of thinking still are today.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Winslow Homer and John Rogers Tackle the Civil War



Winslow Homer
A Veteran in a New Field
1865



John Rogers
*Wounded Scout,
A Friend in the Swamp*
1864

During the Civil War, ordinary Americans were more concerned about fathers, brothers, and sons fighting that in purchasing art for their homes. In what was otherwise a seeming dry spell in the art world, two artists got their start and actually made their reputations during the war years.

Winslow Homer reflected back his own experiences of the turbulence of war as an artist-reporter. Ever shaped by these formative experiences, we see his work grow in richness and complexity as he uses his visual vocabulary to describe the complexities of day-to-day life during the war and its aftermath—the Reconstruction period that followed.

John Rogers innovated affordable tabletop sculptures that allowed him to tap into the anxieties of everyday people, at war and at home. His empathetic, and often witty, works not only touch on American middle-class concerns, but also made his works in-demand around the world. From his production and marketing innovations to the narratives his sculptures told, Rogers created long-lasting changes to the American art market.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Thomas Eakins and Changing Roles for Men

Alt Title: Thomas Eakins and the Art of Men at Work in the Late 1800s



Thomas Eakins. *The Champion Single Sculls*. 1871.

After the Civil War, when a generation of young men was devastated, momentous changes shaped the daily American experience. For the average white man after the war, upper-most in these life-changes was rapid urbanization supported by an industrial machine refocused from war-making to profit-making. The very nature of work changed. Working class men now lived life according to the alarm clock and factory bell, rather than the cycle of the sun. A new middle-class emerged, solidified with respect for professions like doctor, lawyer, architect, and scientist.

Artists like Thomas Eakins mirrored back the newness, excitement, confusion, and anxiety of these rapid societal changes. Their art captured urban men's radically changing lives after the Civil War that led society to idolize particular occupations and heroizes athletic stars. Our artistic deep dive will include:

- A look at the life and career of the iconic American artist Thomas Eakins, including his famous depictions lionizing middle-class professional work and mirroring insecurities for a generation devastated by war
- Consideration of art works focused on the working class by John Ferguson Weir and Thomas Anschutz
- A celebration of technological innovations in modern work and leisure time
- Recognition of how the changes in work also created and reflected social anxiety—and an understanding of the role sports played in dealing with that anxiety

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Finding Her Way: Women Artists Paint Urban Women's Experiences 1840-1940



Elizabeth Okie Paxton. *The Breakfast Tray*. c1910.

The American experiment has allowed for many forms of societal rule-breaking, but historically, women have been bound by tradition. Women artists often found themselves in gender-busting struggles to be taken seriously as professionals, while juggling the demands of their domestic lives. In this talk, we take a close look at their artwork that not only tells the eye-opening, funny, and even sexy stories of historical American women, but also are surprisingly relevant today.

Most of these artists have fallen into obscurity with their death, no matter their success while living. Together we will resuscitate and celebrate the art careers of historical women working over a 100 year period. Join American art historian Rena Tobey for this engaging talk that mirrors American women's history through the lens of unforgettable art works.

Artists include: Lilly Martin Spencer, Alice Barber Stephens, Marie Danforth Page, Elizabeth Okie Paxton, Theresa Bernstein, and Isabel Bishop. Tailored for your group and specific interests.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Henry Ossawa Tanner and African American Voices Rise



Henry Ossawa Tanner
The Banjo Lesson
1893

During the 1800s, African Americans made art that was respected and sought after by the wider art market. Mostly free Blacks, some with art training, these 19th century artists had complicated relationships with slavery in America and the paths of opportunity available to them. The earlier artists worked in genre—types of art—that mirror what white artists were creating, following the same hierarchy of most respected to least valuable. Over time, more distinctively Black experiences entered the work.

When portraiture was the dominant form of American art, Joshua Johnson painted white sitters with both insight and the frequently used conventional tropes. Robert Duncanson worked in various genres with equal mastery. As with his white colleagues, he coded his landscapes with symbolic meaning. He painted elegant murals in the mansion of Cincinnati's greatest art patron. Edmonia Lewis suffered horrific racial discrimination and ultimately left the U.S. for Rome and a celebrity career.

Likewise, Henry Ossawa Tanner started his career in the U.S. with sensitive, stereotype-defying portrayals of everyday life and then left for European success with religious works. Other artists, like Charles Ethan Porter, stayed in the U.S. and worked to current tastes and the art market to build their careers however possible. In the 20th-century, African American voices found more stages; these 19th-century painters and sculptors deserve equal billing.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Immigrant Experience, 1850-1950



Louis Lang. *Return of the 69th (Irish) Regiment, N.Y.S.M. from the Seat of War.* 1862.

What better way to understand the immigrant experience than through an immigrant artist's eyes? With immigrant arrivals, the populations of urban centers, particularly in New York, exploded from the mid-1800s until World War 2. The cultures of Irish, German, Chinese, Jewish, Italian, and more forever changed the American identity.

In this talk, we take a deep look at art works that express the experiences of these diverse immigrants—from the processing entry-point station to the tenements, teeming city streets, and work opportunities and challenges encountered in their adopted home.

Artists include: Francis Luis Mora, Louis Lang, Jacob Riis, Joseph Stella, Martin Lewis, O. Louis Guglielmi, and Ben Shahn.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Glories of the Ex-Pats and Gilded Age American Art



William Merritt Chase. *In the Studio*. 1882.

Asked to name a favorite type of art and many will name Impressionism. That style of art, so centered on beauty, perfectly typified the values and aspirations of the Gilded Age in the United States and abroad. Inherently elegant, celebrating the refinement of the wealthy, American artists working in the late 1800s until World War I embraced this European art form.

Many may not recognize the out-sized role that American artists played in the development of this aesthetic art. Three ex-patriots—James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent, and Mary Cassatt—helped establish modern art vocabulary while demonstrating that American art was worthy of respect overseas. William Merritt Chase made several trips to Europe to study art, including an infamous meeting with Whistler and establishing a deep friendship with Sargent. He brought their sensibility and French Impressionism home to New York, a place so suited to the American version of that modern style.

This course considers each of these artists—their lives, work, celebrity, and even scandals. Our art-centric journey includes:

- James McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent Rock the Modern Art World
- Mary Cassatt and Gilded Age Women Artists
- William Merritt Chase and American Impressionism: Utopia of the Gilded Age

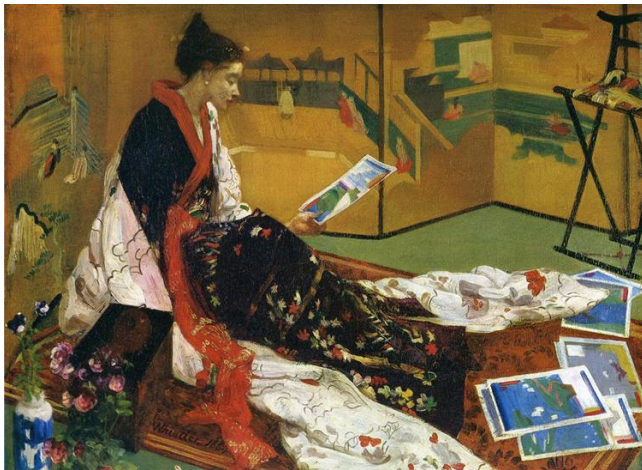
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Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



James McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent Rock the Modern Art World



James McNeil Whistler
Caprice in Purple and Gold
1864



John Singer Sargent
Madame X
1884

James Abbott McNeill Whistler and John Singer Sargent may have never met, but their art careers took similar trajectories. Both left the U.S. to make their work overseas, and both shocked their contemporary art worlds with their paintings and oversized personalities. But how exactly did the beauty of their works break through traditional conventions to invent the modern art language? This is the story of two visionary artists who put American art on the international map.

Our artistic deep dive will include:

- A look at the lives and career choices of two iconic American artists
- Tales of scandal involving both artists, from the infamous Whistler libel case, to the searing story of the Peacock Room, to the jolt of Madame X
- Dissecting Whistler and Sargent images to understand what made their works so modern
- An understanding of how these in-demand artists were pivotal to the development of celebrity culture

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Mary Cassatt and Gilded Age Women Artists



Mary Cassatt. *In the Loge*. 1877.

American women artists often get dismissed for depicting traditional scenes of domestic life — but is there more to that picture than meets the eye? For artists like Mary Cassatt and Cecilia Beaux, they did just that — they built careers showcasing the subjects they were 'expected' to depict, but layering in complex themes and scenes that challenged convention. It's time to resuscitate the joy and beauty of the works of these women painters and sculptors, while also appreciating their subtle ingenuity.

Come explore the artworks of American women artists of the Gilded Age and their style and techniques that subverted the status quo and broke the rules. Our artistic deep dive will include:

- An analytical look at Mary Cassatt's paintings
- An introduction to Cecilia Beaux, Bessie Potter Vonnob, and other artists working in the U.S. in the late 1800s and early 1900s
- A consideration of their career choices, from Mary Cassatt leaving the U.S. for Paris in frustration, to why Cecilia Beaux and a number of other painters and sculptors decided to stay put
- An appreciation of techniques these artists used that were distinctly modern
- Renewed pleasure in seemingly mundane moments of everyday life

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



William Merritt Chase and American Impressionism: Utopia of the Gilded Age



William Merritt Chase. *At the Seaside*. c1892.

If you were a mainstream artist living in New York and other large cities around the turn of the 20th century, chances are you wanted to showcase the best the city had to offer — the elite, the beautiful gardens, the fabulous hustle and bustle. The style of the moment was Impressionism, and Americans put their unique spin on this French-originating movement. Within this generation of creatives, there were also photographers who rebelled against the mainstream, showing the underbelly of the city. This art-centric journey takes viewers through two waves of depictions of New York between the 1880s and the beginning of World War I, including:

- A look at the American Impressionism movement, with paintings by William Merritt Chase and Childe Hassam which highlighted beauty in the city with a particular American flair
- An overview of photography that showcased the underbelly of NYC society
- A discussion of the Social Reform movement, and how the photography of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine rattled cages during what was known as the “City Beautiful” era
- An understanding of how the 1%/99% split reflected in the Gilded Age era is comparable to today

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

American Women Artists: Rise to Professionalism, 1845-1945



Violet Oakley. *Three Women (The Red Rose Girls)*. 1903.

The American experiment has allowed for many forms of societal rule-breaking, but historically, women artists often found themselves bound by old-world conventions. In this course, we take a deep look at the artworks of extraordinary American women artists, some familiar and most less so. You'll get a better understanding of the strategies these artists employed to become professionals, a reflection of the challenges urban women faced overall.

Most of these artists have fallen into obscurity upon death, regardless of the successes they achieved while living. Together, we will resuscitate and celebrate the art careers of notable women working over 100 years, including:

- Shaking Hands with Lilly Martin Spencer
- Ex-Pat Sculptors and Painters
- Philadelphia on the Rise
- The Red Rose Girls Illustrating Women's Lives
- The Boston School Uses Beauty to Advance the Story
- Theresa Bernstein Exuberantly Describing the City
- Isabel Bishop and Peggy Bacon: Change During the Great Depression

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Shaking Hands with Lilly Martin Spencer



Lilly Martin Spencer. *Shake Hands?* 1854.

The American experiment has allowed for many forms of societal rule-breaking, but historically, women artists often found themselves bound by old-world conventions. Even so, Lilly Martin Spencer broke the chains.

Perhaps no artist better captures the experience of day-to-day life of American women in the mid-1800s than Spencer. Come learn how one of the first American professional women artists balanced her chaotic home life with her career aspirations. See how the American Art Union both liberated and bound Spencer to a particular aesthetic, while also making her famous in her day.

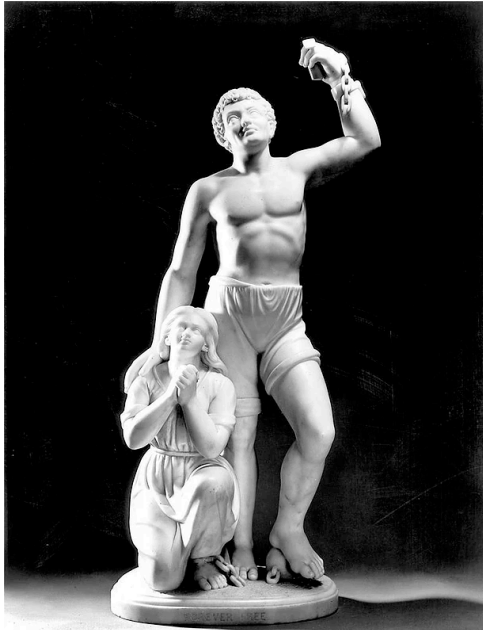
Laugh with her distinctively wry and witty 'kitchen' paintings that satirize gender roles, what it meant to be a middle-class woman, the anxieties of a rapidly changing modern world, and how the growing women's movement complicated it all.

You'll come away with a fresh appreciation for this relevant artist, and who knows, maybe a little flour on your hand.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Ex-Pat Sculptors and Painters



Edmonia Lewis. *Forever Free*. 1867-68.

The American experiment has allowed for many forms of societal rule-breaking, but historically, women artists often found themselves bound by old-world conventions. Several artists refused to take these restrictions and left to make careers in Europe.

The sculptors congregated in Rome, for its ancient sculptural tradition and proximity to marble quarries. Once Harriet Hosmer and Anne Whitney established themselves, they attracted Edmonia Lewis, who was escaping dire racism, to join their supportive community. Together they became a must-see stop on any American's or European's Grand Tour.

Painters longed for the art training available in Paris, and to rise to the level of respected achievement as a result. Elizabeth Nourse broke down barriers for American artists, showing her work at the prestigious Salon. While Mary Cassatt did not enjoy that success, she instead focused on innovating a modern-art vocabulary while couched in her conventional subject matter of domestic life.

In their quest for professionalism, these artists helped establish American art as worthy of admiration throughout the western world.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Gilded Age Beauties



Cecilia Beaux. *A Little Girl*. 1887.



Bessie Potter Vonnoh. *A Young Mother*. 1896.

From the 1880s to outbreak of World War I, opportunities for women artists blossomed. To avoid upsetting the conventions of gender roles supported by more conservative art patrons, these artists favored traditional subjects of domestic life, while innovating in style, technique, and medium.

Philadelphia, with its numerous art schools, provided a favorable and nurturing art environment for women. Cecilia Beaux not only trained in Philadelphia, but became a full-time art instructor for 20 years, a first for the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Alice Barber Stephens established illustration as a viable career path for working mothers.

Bessie Potter Vonnoh enjoyed a companionate marriage with her artist husband, both working in New York. She, too, used a comforting subject matter, expressed through the manly medium of bronze. Evelyn Beatrice Longman defied gender-restrictions, competing with men for and winning commissions. She broke barriers in how we see art as well.

Together these women used the aesthetic appeal of beauty and grace so favored in the Gilded Age and contributed their voices to the rise of modernity.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Red Rose Girls Illustrating Women's Lives



Elizabeth Shippen Green
Life was made for love and cheer
1904

Influenced aesthetically by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and American illustrator Howard Pyle, the Red Rose Girls broke their own glass ceilings in the art world. In the early 20th century, Elizabeth Shippen Green, Violet Oakley, and Jessie Wilcox Smith, dubbed the Red Rose Girls after the home they shared, took advantage of a publishing boom and helped establish the Golden Age of Illustration in the United States.

Together, they created successful careers with leading publishers, simultaneously supporting and subverting gender norms. Their individual and collective stories reveal their clever strategies, and their artwork continues to illustrate our world today.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Boston School Uses Beauty to Advance the Story



Lilian Westcott Hale
L'Edition de Luxe
1910

The Boston School was a loose affiliation of men and women artists devoted to depictions of beauty. Specializing in lovely interiors of wealthy Boston area homes and portraits of its society, these artists blended influences of the Aesthetic movement of art for art's sake and the Dutch Golden Age of the 1600s with those careful, elegant depictions of everyday life.

The artists who taught in Boston's art schools welcomed women artists, and several formed intimate relationships. Networks of friendships and marriages bound Ellen Day Hale, Lilian Westcott Hale, and Elizabeth Okie Paxton. An earlier generation featured wildly successful artists with Boston's affluent Back Bay—Marie Danforth Page was the go-to society portraitist for the elite, and Lilla Cabot Perry brought Japanese aesthetic and the influence of Claude Monet's friendship from her years abroad.

Together, these artists provided each other support, critique, and exhibition opportunities and established a style of delicate elegance that suited their traditional art patrons. Ironically, their talent and success granted them the opportunity to live unconventional lives as New Women.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Theresa Bernstein Exuberantly Describing the City



Theresa Bernstein. *In the Elevated*. 1916.

Technological innovations affected every aspect of life in America's exploding cities in the early 20th century. The Urban Realists worked to capture and describe the rapid changes to the landscape of New York City.

Theresa Bernstein, in her unprecedented long career, showed the woman's experience of the new urban experience. Intimate, often deeply personal, her paintings also expressed the energy of the age with hot colors and animated brushwork. Attracted to the big events of her day like Suffrage parades, the mundane of unemployment offices, and cultural hubs such as the Metropolitan Opera and Carnegie Hall, Bernstein blends all elements, classes, and experiences of the modern city.

Her story and American women's lives intertwined through the decades, while also revealing the struggles she and her artist husband faced during the upheavals of the 20th century. Her works reveal the resilience and determination of the American spirit.

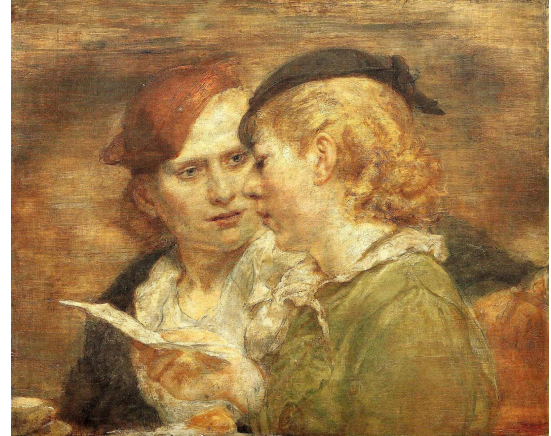
Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Isabel Bishop and Peggy Bacon: Change During the Great Depression



Peggy Bacon. *Frenzied Effort*. 1925.



Isabel Bishop. *Two Girls*. 1935.

American art tends toward Realism, an art movement focused on naturalistic depictions of the lives of ordinary people. Two artists working during the Great Depression into mid-20th-century used their very different styles to reveal the joys and stresses of the everyday.

Peggy Bacon banked on her ability to use line to tell a story, creating memorable commentary and caricatures of modern life. Reaching celebrity status, she depicted cultural mavens and the powerful with gentle satire and knowing wit.

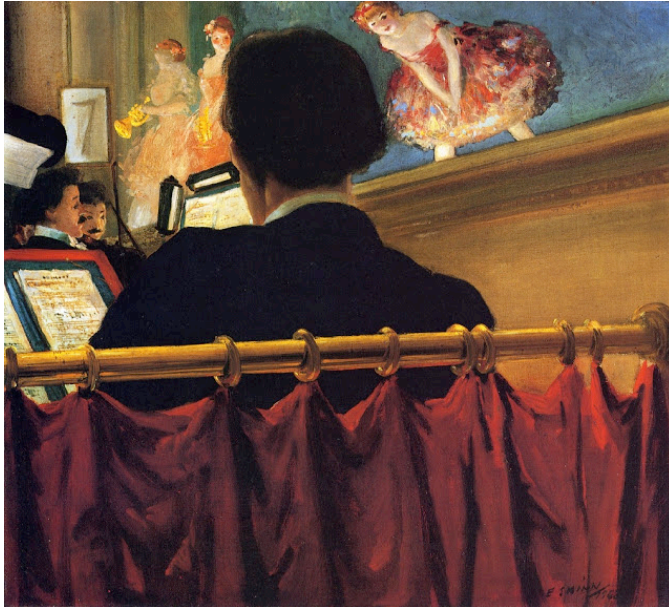
During the Great Depression, artists of the Fourteenth Street School used their works to touch the hearts of viewers and evoke action to make change. Working from her Union Square studio in New York City, Isabel Bishop studied people in all their circumstances, as they worked, lived, and played the Depression in that one place. She particularly resonated with young women who worked in order to save their families during times of high unemployment, and both the opportunities and challenges they faced.

Articulate in her vision of the American Dream, Bishop painted the particular, but also a sweeping sociological expression of her vision for a positive future that could not be dragged down.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Modern City: Art of New York City, 1900-1950



Everett Shinn. *The Orchestra Pit*. 1906-07.

Take a fresh look at New York City through the eyes of some of America's greatest artists who were endlessly inspired by the city. Their exuberant depictions of the people and places collectively tell the visual story of New York's rise to a global powerhouse, while also sharing intimate details of daily life.

In this highly interactive, image-rich class, we will dive into works of art so you see the city in fresh ways. We will look at urban realists who described the explosion of the new urban scene; women whose salons and museums established New York as a center for modern art; Harlem Renaissance artists who gave voice to the African American experience; social realists who unveiled the challenges and joys of the Depression; and mid-century modernists who altered how we see daily life. Sessions include:

- John Sloan and Urban Realists Exuberantly Describe the City
- Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and Women Artists Create the New York Art Scene
- The Harlem Renaissance
- Reginald Marsh, Social Realism and Picturing the Depression
- Edward Hopper and Mid-Century Modern

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

John Sloan and Urban Realists Exuberantly Describe the City



John Sloan. *Election Night*. 1907.

New York City has long captivated and inspired some of America's greatest artists, each with their own unique perspective of the growing metropolis. And focusing in on the first half of the 20th century, these artists tell a visual story of the city's rise to a global powerhouse, while also sharing intimate details of daily life — whether showcasing its glamor and grandeur or grit and grief. It's time for a highly interactive, image-rich series into works of art that capture the real New York.

Inspired by the motto "art for life's sake," these urban-realist artists walked the city day and night, capturing the exuberant excitement of turn-of-the-20th-century New York. Our artistic deep dive will include:

- A look at the diverse styles of artists working in New York from 1900 to 1913
- An overview of the intentions and techniques of John Sloan and his colleagues that were fresh, engaging, and delightful
- Examples of how these artists documented the new urban scene with its technological wonders, new palaces for entertainment, and everyday pleasures of food and drink
- An understanding of how the Urban Realists broke away from the traditional art world to give us lasting images of a growing, bold, optimistic city

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and Women Artists Create the New York Art Scene



Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney with her sculptures, including "Impressions of War" 1919

While we take New York City's first-rate art scene for granted these days, it could have easily never existed. Had it not been for a handful of women who decided to rebel against traditional lives in the domestic sphere, NYC may not have become a center for artistic imagination. This is the story of wealthy women from the early 20th century who devoted their time, money, and talent to making New York one of the premier locations of fine art in the world.

In this talk, we highlight the journeys of four powerful women who defied the strictures set for elite women and made New York a global art center. Our virtual showcase of these ground-breaking women will include:

- The role of women as art salon hosts, and what exactly happened at these ground-breaking events
- A look at the artwork of three often-overlooked women artists—Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Anna Hyatt Huntington, and Florine Stettheimer
- Understanding the civic pride these wealthy women felt, leading to creating art institutions, and how the New York City art world owes a debt to philanthropic women
- A case study of the rise of the 'independent' artist

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Harlem Renaissance



Aaron Douglas
Song of the Towers
1934

Harlem flourished in the 1920s, energized by the Great Migration of African Americans from the South who were looking for jobs in New York City. The first generation of photographers, painters, and muralists tapped into new calls for expressing racial pride and optimism; the second worked through the Depression and World War II, carrying on this inspiration and deepening the depictions. This is the story of the art of the Harlem Renaissance, which is still influencing artists today.

As we embark on a journey through the art of the Harlem Renaissance, which celebrated Harlem and its people through a flowering of creative inspiration, our virtual showcase will include:

- A look at the diverse styles of artists working in Harlem from the 1920s to 1940s
- An overview of two generations of Harlem Renaissance artists — some well-known, others less familiar
- An understanding of how contemporary African American artists stand on the shoulders of these breakthrough artists

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Reginald Marsh, Social Realism and Picturing the Depression



Reginald Marsh. *20-Cent Movie*. 1936.

While the Great Depression typically stirs up images of soup lines and rundown shacks, not all was doom and gloom — artists working during this period were as varied in mood and intent as New York was diverse. Whether it was the Social Realists who created empathy and relished the city scene, artists working under the New Deal's Works Progress Administration who painted to uplift, or others who were rule-breakers, all were capturing that distinctive time in different ways. It's time to take a close look at the artists and art that portrayed a struggling America while also celebrating the joys of Americans' everyday lives.

This art-centric journey through the exuberant artworks made in New York during the Great Depression will include:

- A look at the diverse artworks created by men and women during the Great Depression
- A case study of the playful, witty, urbane work of Reginald Marsh
- Consideration of art that focus on Union Square, New York's center for protest and free speech
- An understanding of how New York City became the inspiration for distinctive American art made in the 1930s

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Edward Hopper and Mid-Century Modern



Edward Hopper. *Night Hawks*. 1942.

New York City, in the early 20th century, bustled its way to global powerhouse status through its optimism, technological innovations, and moxie. But not everyone experienced this same exuberance. The art of Edward Hopper and other mid-century modernists revealed their experience of the city as strange and off putting.

As we look through the eyes of mid-century figurative artists to experience urban anxiety in times not so different from our own, our artistic deep dive will include:

- Dissecting images by mid-century figurative artists, including Edward Hopper, George Tooker, and Bernard Perlin
- An exploration of how these artists subverted narrative art conventions to create instability
- An overview of immediate post-World War II figurative art that unveils those unsettled times

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Visions of New York City



Francis Luis Mora
Manhattan Cocktail,
1626-1938
c1938

Come take a deep look at New York as depicted by its artists. Their works depict the New York City's people and places and collectively tell the visual story of its social and cultural history from the Dutch settlement to World War II. Immigrants have captured the city with fresh eyes since the earliest encounters of Dutch and English colonists with Native Americans. New York was a hot bed of Revolutionary politics and at the forefront of developing a marketplace economy that launched the city's rise to economic superpower. Immigrants brought traditions from their homeland creating New York's dominance in pop culture, even as the individuals themselves faced tremendous hardships.

Ever growing, the city grew up the grid, often led by enterprising tech entrepreneurs in transit. Laying streetcar tracks led to uptown development and outlined the future for bridges and the elevated and underground trains. New York City, ever expanding, ever changing, rushing headlong into the future as a modern city. Our art-centric topics include:

- Dutch and English Colonial Beginnings
- Forming the Metropolis
- Immigration: 1850s-1930s
- The Gilded Age and its Underbelly
- Up, Down, and Around the City: Artist Views of New York Transit
- The Modern City can be added as a single session or with the course described pg. 34 - 39

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Dutch and English Colonial Beginnings



Johannes Oertel. *Pulling Down the Statue of King George III*. 1852-53.

From the first encounters between Europeans and Native Americans to New York in the Revolutionary War, artists have been drawn to depict the city. In our broad-ranging look at the era, we will treat the powerful colonial governor Peter Stuyvesant as a case study, while also considering ordinary Dutch lives of New Amsterdam. Don't miss the cross-dressing governor of New York and Cornplanter, the Seneca chief who negotiated peace with the English. Escaping the French Revolution, Baroness Hyde de Neuville sketched the people and places of New York's early national period with her fresh eyes.

Pop culture from the mid-1800s to the Colonial Revival of the early 1900s seized upon mythic ideas of the colonial experience. We will weave in postcards, prints, even textbook illustrations to compare to artworks made during the 1600s and 1700s to allow our understanding of the period and the legends that surround it to bloom.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Forming the Metropolis



Francis Guy. *Tontine Coffee House, NYC. c1797.*

While modern New York City is highly regarded for so many things — restaurants, finance, tech and innovation, art and entertainment — how exactly did the city become such a powerhouse? Through paintings, photographs, sculpture, and other art objects, it's time to explore the beginnings of New York City's rise in the 1800s from an afterthought to a global force.

In this talk, we embark on an art-centric journey through 19th-century New York City, and how the period between 1800 and the Civil War would lay the foundation of the metropolis that we know and love today. Our virtual showcase will include:

- Understanding how New York City became a "hub of everything," from commerce and shipping to food and spectacle
- Exploring the array of New York's innovations using a variety of art objects—such as oyster pots, the earliest photography, widely disseminated prints and posters, wallpaper, and silhouettes, maybe even a quilt
- Revealing the diversity of New Yorkers who built its businesses and economy

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Immigration: 1850s-1930s



Louis Lang. *Return of the 69th (Irish) Regiment, N.Y.S.M. from the Seat of War. 1862.*

New York City has always been a city of the newly-arrived. The period from the mid-1800s until the 1930s saw mass migration, leading to a population explosion in a city ready to grow through the migratory waves, pushing infrastructure to catch up. The influx of people and cultures made New York a world capital.

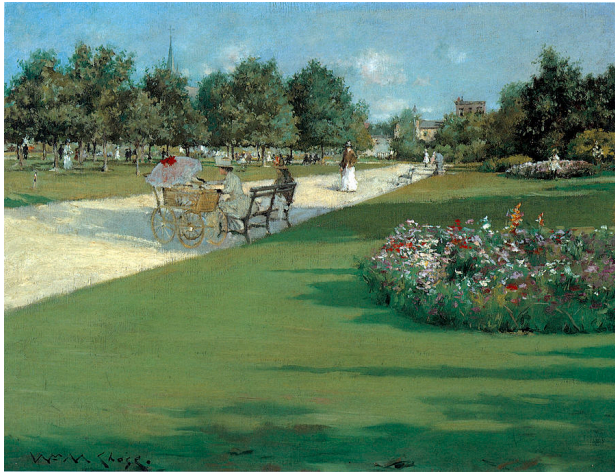
Immigrants came, often escaping economic and political distress in home countries. The potato famine in Ireland and failed revolution in Germany brought the earliest waves. Chinese and Italian immigrants sought work and dignity. Eastern European Jewish immigrants fled violent hatred for the Golden Land. All brought their traditions, customs, foodways, and drive to succeed. And artists were there every step of the way to document it all.

In this talk, the city's diversity is explored through diverse media, ranging from painting and sculpture to photography and portfolios of prints to signage and displays. The path for immigrants wasn't always easy—marked by violence and tragedy—but the result collectively built New York as a city of the world. The art is sure to inspire and to touch your heart.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

The Gilded Age and its Underbelly



William Merritt Chase. *Thompkins Park*. 1887.



Jacob Riis. *Home of an Italian Ragpicker*. 1890.

If you were a mainstream artist or photographer living in New York within the last 200 years, chances are you wanted to showcase the best the city had to offer — the elite, the beautiful gardens, the fabulous hustle and bustle. But within each generation of creatives, a handful of artists rebelled, and insisted on showing to the world what New York's underbelly really looked like. In this talk, we look at art that tells the story of both worlds.

Our art-centric journey through two waves of artistic expression that occurred in New York between the 1880s and the beginning of World War I will include:

- An overview of the Gilded Age visual culture including the City Beautiful era with its Beaux Arts architecture and over-the-top competition of the wealthy
- Exploration of American Impressionism, particularly William Merritt Chase's depictions of Gilded Age New York
- The effects of mass immigration on housing, health, and economic prospects of hundreds of thousands of new arrivals
- A discussion of the Social Reform movement, and how the photography of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine awakened the conscience of New York society

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Up, Down, and Around the City: Artist Views of New York Transit



William Schenck. *Third Avenue Railroad Depot*. c1859-60.

As New York grew from its downtown Manhattan roots, city dwellers began to have new transportation options to get from place to place, from stage coaches and trolleys to bridges and subway tunnels. This transit network not only attracted riders, but also artists who were endlessly captivated by how people moved around the chaotic city. This is the story of how New York's transit infrastructure has evoked pride, wonder, and imagination amongst artists for hundreds of years, and resulted in bold, optimistic art that captures a city in motion.

We will explore the artworks of New York transit from the 1850s to today, from underground subways, to horse-drawn buggies on the streets, to even hot air balloons in the sky. Our artistic deep dive will include:

- An overview of how artists depicted New York transit through time, including the stagecoach, trolley, bridges, ferries, El, and subway
- A look at the diverse styles of painters and photographers tackling transit
- A consideration of infrastructure from the artists' eye of Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, John Sloan, Berenice Abbott, Andy Warhol, and many more

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



American Artist Families and Couples

Solo talk or series

Young artists often need help launching their career, and what better way than through an established family connection. This interactive, image-rich class centers on American artist-family constellations and how their artwork reveals intriguing insights into their intimate family dynamics. Fathers and children, parents and siblings, the family dynamics so familiar play out in these families' art, in often astonishing, often funny, and always recognizable ways.

Similarly, young artists find not only companionship with other artists, but also often love. What happens to the work when two artists come together in intimate partnership? This talk looks at American artist couples who spark, challenge, annoy, boost, support, and sabotage each other. The twists and turns of love and companionship are closely examined through art works that appear to dialogue and reveal an unexpected peek inside these marriages.

This art-centric journey includes:

- The Peale Family Revolutionizes Modern Art
- The Wyeth Family and the Modern 20th Century
- Artist Couples Paint the New Marriage

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

In development, ready for Fall 2022. Thank you for your interest!

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



The Peale Family Revolutionizes Modern Art

Patriarch Charles Willson Peale was one of only two artists to achieve a live sitting with his friend George Washington and also founded America's first museum, filled with wonders and curiosities. His story is just the beginning; the artist dynasty of the Peale family carries through from the birth of a nation to America's rise as a global economic power, while also providing peeks into their familial relationships.

In development, ready for Fall 2022. Thank you for your interest!

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



The Wyeth Family and the Modern 20th Century

In the 20th century, the Wyeth family touched every important artistic tradition, while revealing the American character. This family's paintings embody the yearning to break free from tradition, become one's own person, and be acknowledged within the family as creative voices.

In development, ready for Fall 2022. Thank you for your interest!

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Artist Couples Paint the New Marriage

One of the best places to look not only for a quick fling, but also for a relationship partner has long been in art class. In this interactive, image-rich class, we will look at the story of 19th- and 20th-century art-making couples, using their artwork as a kind of dialogue providing intimate insights into their relationship.

We'll consider the power dynamics of teacher-student relationships, such as Thomas Eakins and Susan Macdowell Eakins; John Sloan and Helen Farr Sloan; and Philip Hale and Lilian Westcott Hale. Students who met in art class and coupled include Edward Hopper and Josephine Nivison Hopper, the Red Rose Girls, and William McGregor Paxton and Elizabeth Okie Paxton.

Come revel in the art works made by some of the country's most noted artists and then dig deeper to learn more about the creators as people in relationship.

In development, ready for Fall 2022. Thank you for your interest!

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Books and Storytelling in American Art

Solo talk or series



Robert Duncanson. *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*. 1853.



John Rogers. *Ichabod Crane and the "Headless Horseman."* 1887.

Books and art have had a close relationship for centuries. Come open the cover of this partnership to explore how American artists have used books and their stories to reveal character, amplify stories, establish legends, and tickle our imaginations.

Myths emerge from the stories we tell ourselves. We'll consider the myths of the educated reader, American icons like Betsy Ross, the wild west, and 19th-century action heroes. With the explosion of print media after the American Civil War, artists found a new path—illustrating poetry, magazine stories, novels, children's books, and more. These artists, led by ground-breaking teacher/illustrator Howard Pyle, knew how to tell a story. They capture our attention today, just as they did 100 years ago.

Thrillers, action, romance! If you love stories, if you love art, come see how they play together.

Solo talk or series:

- Mythmaking in American Art: The Stories We Tell Ourselves
- Illustrating the Story
- Creating the Story (for team-building, participation, creativity programs)

Each session can also serve as a stand-alone talk. Descriptions follow.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Mythmaking in American Art: The Stories We Tell Ourselves



Jennie Brownscombe
*The First Thanksgiving
at Plymouth*
1914



Frederic Remington
A Dash for the Timber
1889

Just what you've been looking for—thrillers, action, adventure! No, not in the movies, but in American art. Join us for this image-filled, interactive talk on mythmaking and American art.

Myths emerge from the stories we tell ourselves—how we know ourselves as Americans. We'll consider the historical myths of Thanksgiving and icons Betsy Ross and Paul Revere. We'll head west to discover what made it so wild. And we'll look at our first action heroes, dating from almost 150 years ago. Get ready to experience, and maybe even challenge, the great American myths, through the eyes of American artists.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks

Illustrating the Story



John Quidor. *Rip Van Winkle and his Companions at the Inn Door of Nicholas Vedder*. 1839.



Howard Pyle. *The Flying Dutchman*. 1900.

Literary subjects have long made perfect partners for artists looking for compelling subject matter for the work. In this talk, we look at a wide range of literary sources that painters and sculptors have depicted with joyful glee.

Painter John Quidor and sculptor John Rogers reveled in the popular stories of Washington Irving, further popularizing the stories with their witty, insightful portrayals. With the explosion of newspapers and magazines after the Civil War, illustrators, led by charismatic teacher Howard Pyle, depicted the supreme moment of the story to heighten the tension and make those publications fly off the newsstand shelves. We explore the compositional choices—how line, color, shape, and more help tell the story and make these art works as exciting as any great story.

Rena Tobey

Courses and Talks



Creating the Story (for team-building, participation, creativity programs)



John Singer Sargent
The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit
1882



J.C. Leyendecker
Men Reading
1914

American artists love to embed their work within narratives. But often, that narrative is ambiguous, allowing viewers to create a story on their own. What just happened? What happens next? Who are the figures and what is important to them?

In this highly interactive experience, participants are invited to craft the story of these often-famous works of American art. The talk is perfect for your corporate retreat, writers' group, team-building meeting, or brainstorming session. Let this great art spark your inner storyteller!



Rena Tobey Testimonials

"I thoroughly enjoyed your course and reported so on the school evaluation. Each lecture was rich with cultural, art historical and idiosyncratic information. I loved learning how, in fits and starts, women artists gained agency over their careers and personal lives. Thank you."

Heather F., May 2021

What a wonderful event!! I loved it. Rena Tobey is a gifted lecturer with enormous academic knowledge and a lively and interesting presentation. I loved her method of organizing biography with historical with art information. This is the second time I have "found" her and will be looking for more from Ms. Tobey. Thank you! I enjoy the opportunity for touring online.

Sincerely, Bonnie G., April 2021

I really enjoyed your course—every class I not only discovered many interesting artists but also you moved us through all the feelings of every period. It was the perfect company for these times to understand more, but also it was comforting. I think I'll never forget that class you closed with John Frederick Kensett's *Sunset on the sea*, remembering us to find healing in nature. *Tere C., November 2020*

Rena is such an excellent presenter, so informative & engaging - her talks are a delight to listen to & I always learn so much. *New York Adventure Club participant, April 2021*

Her depth of scholarship was so impressive, and she presented it all with enthusiasm, humor, intelligence while engaging the "audience". It left all of us wanting more. *Debra G., April 2020*

"Rena has a gift for bringing fine art alive, which is a true feat in the age of digital distractions. Audiences of all ages are captivated by her interactive presentations, and always leave with a far greater appreciation for still paintings, and the fascinating artists behind the brushstrokes."

Corey William Schneider, CEO & Founder, New York Adventure Club, 2020

"Very well organized, intelligently presented with an engaging and charming manner."

"Rena's passion and knowledge about subject. Very interesting topic. Excellent gripping presentation. Audience interaction stimulating."

Webinar Participants, New York Adventure Club webinar, from evaluations, April 2020

"Rena Tobey gave five sessions on 'Visions of New York' at our non-profit school for people 55+ in Manhattan. The sessions were totally absorbing and, without flashiness, very exciting. Rena's approach is to draw students out so they make their own discoveries, literally seeing more in the paintings and photographs than they would have individually. By encouraging us to stop and explore the images, I think she will have a lasting effect on our appreciation of art." *Judy Langer, Executive Director, The Center for Learning and Living, Inc, Fall 2018*

Rena Tobey

Testimonials

“Rena’s ‘Painting Connecticut’ program was a big hit at the Scranton Memorial Library in Madison. On their way out the door attendees were already asking for her to make a return visit. The talk has a terrific blend of fascinating stories, beautiful artwork, and discussion of some artistic concepts and techniques. This program is accessible to art novices and experts alike. Highly recommended!” *Andy Northrup, Adult Services & Programs Librarian, Scranton Memorial Library, January 2018*

“Rena’s high energy, thoroughly engaging art lectures include high quality visuals that engage the audience. We’ve hosted her numerous times, and she remains a patron favorite!” *Tina Panik, Reference & Adult Services Manager, Avon Free Public Library, 2017*

“Rena Tobey gave a marvelous presentation ‘Finding Her Way’ for the Middlesex Institute for Lifelong Education (MILE). I loved the way that she interacted with the audience, and was able to elicit so many great comments, observations, and questions from them ... as well as giving us a wealth of information. Our group learned so much from Rena, and we had such fun learning that we could have stayed well beyond the program’s time frame — in fact, several of us did just that!” *Nancy Jordan, MILE Advisory Board Member, March 2016*

“We were delighted with Rena’s presentation of ‘Clothes Make the Country: Fashion History and American Colonial Portraits.’ Rena’s enthusiasm for the subject was infectious, and the entire audience was enthralled. We look forward to having Rena return to the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum to share even more details on how to read early American portraiture.” *Charles Lyle, Executive Director, Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, October 2016*



Thank you for reading through this catalog and for considering my programs for your audience.

Look forward to connecting at rena@renatobey.com for your comments and questions, and to book a talk or class.

Please feel free to share the catalog with your colleagues in and beyond your organization.

Meantime, may art fill your life and lift your spirit!