

The recovery of the artistic heritage of female artists in Europe between the wars

Field of Study Artistic heritage

Mandatory training needed to apply for this research topic : No specific qualification is required. However, candidates who have studies in Contemporary Art History and/or Gender Studies will be preferably taken into account.

SUPERVISORS

	First name	LAST NAME	University	Research Unit
Supervisor	Concepción	Lomba Serrano	UNIZAR	Departamento de Historia del Arte
Co-Supervisor	Anna	Ciotta	UNITO	Dipartimento di Lingue e letterature straniere e culture moderne

KEYWORDS

Women artists; Artistic heritage; Europe; Contemporary Age; Gender studies.

ABSTRACT

Our research proposal aims for the recovery of the artistic heritage created by women in the European interwar period, a necessary work to be accomplished in order to increase Europe's artistic heritage and to broaden our knowledge of works of arte created by women.

Although the period in which the research focuses has attracted the attention of specialists in the field of the arts, and many studies have been devoted to analysing the contributions made by creators of different profiles (visual artists, architects, poets, writers, playwrights, filmmakers, photographers, etc.) with their creations, it should be remembered that the vast majority of the protagonists of these works are men. The women present in them have usually been relegated to a secondary position, in their role as companions or muses, and almost never as authors.

Nevertheless, and thanks to the efforts of some research, we know that an important group of women were creators, participating in the avant-garde movements, being pioneers in some cases of certain techniques or forms of expression, and having conceived works that form part of Europe's artistic and cultural heritage, and which must be recovered, studied and valued.

For this reason, this research aims to investigate the artistic heritage created by women in inter-war Europe, with the intention of unravelling who they were and what their contribution was in the field of creation. Within this broad context, it is proposed to focus on the Spanish, Italian and French cases, with the aim of exploring not only the artistic styles they practised but also the relationships established between these territories in the field of training, collecting and the art market.

Research aims and methodology

Main research aims:

- To study the contributions of women artists to the European avant-garde movements, paying special attention to Spanish, Italian and French artistic relations.
- To recover for the European artistic heritage the list of women authors and works produced during the interwar period.
- To include relevant female artists in the discourse of the history of the European Modern Movement.

Methodology:

- To draw up an inventory of works produced by women artists located in museums and private collections.
- Review of documentary sources in archives, museums and other private entities and public institutions.
- Compilation and analysis of memoirs written by women artists.

Relevance and added-value of the proposed research in relation to the current state of knowledge

Research on women artists in inter-war Europe is going through a good period, as shown both by the studies published and the exhibition projects carried out. It is clear that interest in women's creative work is in vogue, and this is certainly to be welcomed. However, it is essential, as our proposal proposes, that the approaches undertaken should be based on serious and reasoned research with the aim of establishing a gendered and non-exclusionary historical narrative, in the awareness that women's artistic production will significantly increase Europe's artistic heritage, constituting a valuable and essential legacy that must be studied and valued.

The main supervisor of this proposal, Dr. Concha Lomba, has led two national projects funded by the State Research Agency of the Spanish Government dedicated to the study of female artistic creation in Spain during the Contemporary Age, with the intention of recovering and highlighting the work of quality female artists for the History of Art. In the second project, currently underway, in which the other supervisor of this proposal, Dr. Anna Ciotta, is also collaborating, we are working on relations between Spain and Europe, always maintaining the artistic heritage created by women as our main object of study. The advances that are being made reveal that there are many contributions made by women in the field of artistic creation, and that it is necessary to carry out more research into this, to find out who was involved, in what styles, to what extent and with what results.

The above background has motivated this proposal for a pre-doctoral project, a research project that would constitute an important contribution to the growth of European artistic heritage and the consolidation of a new historiographical discourse without exclusions, constructed from a gender perspective. The expected results would modify, in some cases, and apply, in others, the current art historiography, as has happened with exhibition projects such as *Maestras* (Museo Nacional Thyssen- Bornemisza, 2023), or *Hacia poéticas de género. Mujeres artistas en España, 1804-1939* (Gobierno de Aragón, 2022, directed by C. Lomba); or with publications such as *Bajo el eclipse. Pintoras en España, 1880- 1939*, written by Concha Lomba (CSIC, 2019) or *Las mujeres en el sistema artístico, 1804-1939* (Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 2023).

Interdisciplinary nature of the research together with the alignment with the CHORAL programme and complementarity expertise of the teams

The proposed research focuses on the study of avant-garde art during the interwar period, a time during which the greatest transformations regarding the arts took place in the 20th century.

To carry it out, and always in line with CHORAL's approach, the aim is to promote work in other entities and institutions that conserve both artistic heritage and the necessary documentary sources, specifically in certain museums and archives where work will be carried out through visits or short stays. Collaboration with cultural facilities of this nature, which house collections of interest for the proposed research, is essential not only to study these collections, which is key to develop the research, but also to disseminate the results of the research. Consequently, work is proposed with the following institutions, with many of which the Institute of Heritage and



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Humanities of the University of Zaragoza has collaboration agreements:

- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid
- Musée d'Orsay, Paris
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Roma
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Torino
- Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid
- Museo de Zaragoza, Zaragoza

Output plan including publication and dissemination activities

- **Integration in research groups and projects:**

The PhD student will be integrated as an effective member in:

- R&D Project *Las artistas en la escena cultural española y su relación con Europa, 1803-1945*, led by the principal researcher, Dr. Concha Lomba, funded by the Agencia Estatal de Investigación del Gobierno de España and currently in force.
- *Vestigium* reference research group, led by Dr. Concha Lomba and recognised by the Government of Aragon in its current period 2023-2025. The group is dedicated to the study of Aragonese Cultural Heritage in its international context and dimension, and the specific research line dedicated to contemporary creation includes gender studies through the analysis of women artists during avant-garde times.
- Departamento de Historia del Arte (Universidad de Zaragoza) y Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere e Culture Moderne (Università di Torino). Both departments, where the supervisors work, will host the student for the duration of his/her research contract.

The integration in these projects and departments will allow the candidate to benefit from a valuable research training by being in contact with the rest of the researchers and to be able to learn and to participate in different activities organised by them: international seminars, training courses, conferences of divulgative character, etc.

- **International research stays:**

Stays abroad, from where to develop the tasks related to the Italian and French territories, so it will be necessary to travel to other cities in those countries:

- 6 months at the Università di Torino, working with the second supervisor, Dr. Anna Ciotta.
- 3 months at the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, partner of the Alliance UNITA, supervised by Dr. Sabine Forero.

- **Participation in scientific conferences:**

The predoctoral candidate will participate in as many scientific meetings as appropriate to present the results of his/her research. It is estimated that he/she will participate in at least two conferences.

- **Publications:**

- Preparation of at least two academic papers in indexed journals.
- Participation in collective books.

- **Short stays in museum institutions:**

Collaboration with museums to carry out research tasks within their collections and activities to transfer the results of research and disseminate the artistic heritage created by women.

- **Specific training in European UNITA Alliance's Doctoral Schools and the CHORAL programme:**

- Summer School
- CHORAL workshops

- **Participation in dissemination activities:**

- Pre-doctoral conferences for the presentation of their research:
 - Seminar "Our doctoral theses" of the Institute of Heritage and Humanities of the University of Zaragoza.

- “Theses in 3 minutes”, of Campus Iberus.

Estimated schedule

Three-year contract, from September 2025 to August 2028:

- Year one:
 - Identification and review of documentary sources and artists' memoirs in archives, museums and other private entities and public institutions. Universidad de Zaragoza.
- Year two:
 - Identification and review of documentary sources and artists' memoirs in archives, museums and other private entities and public institutions. University of Torino (6 months : September 2026-February 2027).
 - Drawing up the inventory of works of art created by women.
- Year three:
 - Stay in UPPA: review of documentary sources (3 months: September 2027-November 2027).
 - Continue work on the inventory.
 - Writing the thesis report.