

I am Francesca Penna, international student from Italy. I completed at the University of Naples Federico II a BA in Art History, focusing on contemporary art. Specifically, my interests relate to the gap gender in arts, between the Nineteenth and Twentieth century, a pivotal moment where through changes in economic, social, and political structures, the hierarchies regulating gender relations also started to crumble. Female painters started to make space for themselves in the holes left by the system, claiming and earning a new social status outside of male painters' subordination. We witness them becoming professional artists, entering the art business, and working as teachers. Female artists, by gaining independence, start the process by which they transform themselves from a passive object of artistic representation to an active subject of it. The convergence of these interdisciplinary themes, that is, the phenomena linked to gender and the historical and artistic Neapolitan evolution of the Nineteenth century are the focus of my BA dissertation titled: «Female painters during the 19th and 20th century in Naples».

I have discovered fourteen painters hidden and almost forgotten among the shelves of several libraries, painters that had nonetheless been an almost constant presence in the cultural life of the city. My Master's thesis project explores more deeply this scenario while focusing on one painter in particular: Angela Carugati. A wonderful pupil of Domenico Morelli, which lived right at the intersection of two centuries, a multifaceted artist, a painter, but also an enthusiastic poetess.

I chose Paris for my Erasmus+ exchange because, in a way, Carugati's art lives there too, at the Salon d'Automne, where she exposed in the 1909.

I strongly believe in the necessity of raising awareness to the gender gap in the art world today, as it is also through the re-evaluation and rediscovery of female artists erased from history, that we can contribute to an attentive revision of art history, while at the same time striving to overcome issues that are still very real.

I believe in giving voice to hidden parts of the past to improve the present and doing that through the history of art.