University of Murcia, 28-29 April 2022
Attendance: In-person or online

The V Art, Power, and Gender Conference is one of the activities organized by the research project MEFER [Portrait Medals and Female Power in Renaissance Europe (I): The Women in the Spanish Monarchy]. The proposed topic for this edition is “Artists and Female Patrons in Renaissance Europe”.

Art History research has traditionally associated renowned artists’ names with male figures that, as kings, noblemen, diplomats, or prelates of the church, promoted their artistic careers commissioning works of art and disseminating them in different European courts. However, this narrative has deliberately ignored the role women played in this equation. In this sense, we find a remarkable example in one of the most acclaimed artists in the Modern Age: Titian. It is noteworthy that the name and prestige associated with the Venetian painter is systematically linked to monarchs like Charles V or Philip II. Despite this, it was Queen Mary of Hungary who, in less than a decade since she met the artist in the Diet of Augsburg, became the main collector of his artwork. The Governess of the Netherlands’ collection of his works surpassed not only Titian’s Italian patrons but also her brother Charles V and her nephew Philip II.

As recent research has proven, artistic historiography has paid little attention to the relationship established between artists and female patrons in the Modern Age. Previous studies have addressed isolated examples that do not allow to articulate a discourse that shows the implication and participation of Renaissance women in the production of artworks and the promotion of the careers of the main artists of this period. The main goal of these Jornadas is to propose a joint study of the efforts these women carried out in both fields—production and promotion of works of art and artists—in the sixteenth century. This global analysis will allow to rewrite the current androcentric discourse that has situated the male figure as the main promoter of the artistic culture in the Modern Age, highlighting the key role that women linked to power developed in the sphere of artistic patronage.
Who were these women? What relationship did they establish with the artists that worked under their service? And, to what extent was their link to these painters, sculptures, architects, and goldsmiths decisive for the promotion of the professional careers of these men and women that have gone down in history as the main actors in the art scene in the Modern Age? It is essential to pay attention to these questions and to examine them profoundly. Only then we will be able to rewrite our current male-centered history that relegates the great female figures to the shadows.

We invite paper proposal based on original research that can contribute to advance in this topic and that explore new subject matters. This must be carried out by establishing the necessary conceptual and theoretical frames for a better understanding of the relationship that these artists had with their female patrons in Renaissance Europe. If you are interested, you can send you paper proposal (between 400-600 words) alongside a short CV to artepoderygenero@um.es

Topics:

I. Artists and Iconography of Power in the service of Queens.
II. Artists, Female Patrons, and Written Sources: Letters, Contracts, and Inventories.
III. Artistic Networks and Cultural Exchanges.
IV. The Patronage of Artists.
V. Noblewomen and Religious Women: The Patron-Artist relationship beyond the Court.

· Deadline for paper submissions: 15 April 2022
· Acceptance notification: 20 April 2022
· Accepted languages for paper proposal: Spanish, English, French, Italian, and Portuguese.